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FEATURE STORY

The "TIME" DETECTIVE

by FRANK BLIGHTON

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A Treat Coming

THE next number of this magazine is going to be one of the most interesting we have ever issued. The feature story is of the gripping sort that holds your interest on account of its unusual plot. We are sure you will enjoy reading every line of

THE WHISPERING ROOM

By FREDERICK C. DAVIS

It is full of exciting adventure, and contains one of those mysteries that are sustained to the end. Do not miss this rare treat for anything.

Then there will be a number of splendid short detective and mystery stories written by some of the most skillful authors in the business. Among them you will find a really great one entitled "The Mystery of the Muffled Shot." It was written by Mr. J. Werner Phelps, who thoroughly understands how to hold your attention. There will be a fascinating story of gentlemen burglars written by Carl G. Hodges, a splendid story entitled "Gold and Silver and Dead Men's Bones" by Carl C. Bradshaw, and several more equally as good.

Among the short articles there will be another from Carl H. Getz, showing the methods of getting proof against law-breakers entitled "Self-Identification of Criminals." This paper is particularly interesting as it exposes the tricks played by men of the underworld and thus puts our readers on their guard against being victimized.

A new short serial will begin, written by Beulah Poynter and entitled "The Mystery of the Calvin Will." This story is one of the best ever written by the talented young playwright.

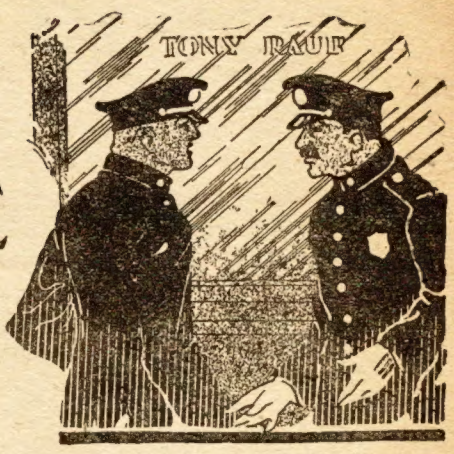
We also have a number of splendid short items of the kind you will enjoy. In short the next number will be a fine one and we hope you will fully enjoy it.

THE EDITOR.

The TIME DETECTIVE

— by —

FRANK BLIGHTON



CHAPTER ONE

IF half the thieves were as brainy as most folks think this Albert Einstein is, then every would-be cop who applied for admission to the police force would first have to show the examining surgeon a fourth dimension on his brain box.

For Einstein has abolished time and space. He says so himself.

He also says that only twelve men in the world understand him; he don't say any of them believe him—and there isn't one cop's name on the list.

The twelve that understand him would never believe a cop. They can't—if they believe the other fellow. For Mr. Einstein can prove to you that you can be in two places at once, and neither of them are where you think you are. Yes, this Mr. Einstein is the newest sun-spot on the dark veil of ignorance all cops are supposed to wear.

If he's right about space and time, then any crook that's a student of his could glide right through the front door of the biggest trust company safe in little old New York, help himself to a bale of Liberty bonds or a jugful of jewels, and step right out again, all without even rippling the varnish on the door.

How would he do it? That's easy! The same way one bead changes places with another without untying the string. Rush into any ten-cent store and Woolworth it out for yourself. There isn't enough space or time to explain it here.

Besides, if it hadn't been for space and time, Chief Bentley of the Bluevale police department wouldn't have come so near to being grabbed by the Bloomingdale asylum gorillas and stuffed into the next padded cell to the one now occupied by a woman who calls herself the "Queen of Sheba."

As it finally turned out, Chief Bentley almost eloped with an onion-bed and swore off on his habit of early rising.

That was his one bad habit.

He would get up anywhere between two and six o'clock in the morning and go roaming around Bluevale as if he thought he was the caliph of Bagdad, although Bluevale, as a rule, was as quiet as a Nova Scotia farm in mid-winter.

Bluevale wasn't so far from New York that you had to have the Lick telescope to see it; neither was it so close that you could stand in it and shoot the windows out of a Bronx tenement with an air rifle. Just betwixt and between.

Bluevale used to look simple but juicy to the big-time crooks from New York. To-

day it looks to the crooks as simple as this fourth dimension does to the rest of us.

One look—and you're cured!

So many crooks in past years tried "jobs" in Bluevale, and so many of them took the rest-cure in Sing Sing or Dannemora, that the rest of them were cured of trying.

That made it awful hard for Patrolman Mike Gilroy.

When Mike "made" the Bluevale force Chief Bentley sent him to the New York police school to pick up a few new wrinkles. Mike came back so saturated with jiu-jitsu that they had to let him have his way with the city hall flagpole to keep him from putting wrinkles in every other cop's bones—the first week.

Mike was sure an enthusiastic cop. Four years after the World War armistice he still tried to catch the cows on his beat talking German. He made every ring on his beat on tick. As a rule, you could set your watch by listening to him slam the box doors on his post.

Mike had a pair of eyes that could spot a black cat in a barrel of tar. He could shoot an epileptic fly off the second-hand of your watch without it ever skipping a tick, and the only things he was afraid of were not doing his duty and not marrying Bridget O'Hare.

Bridget was a dream. Even Sherlock Holmes could never have figured out how that girl came to be mislaid from the "Midnight Frolic" to be a kitchen mechanic for Bluevale's leading jeweler, Giovanni Giolitti.

So one beautiful summer morning somewhere around 3 o'clock, when Chief Bentley couldn't sleep and was walking through Tony Raub's lumberyard and stopped for a minute, careless-like, to fish in his pockets for a cigar, around the corner of the building comes Mike Gilroy, patroling his beat between Box 4 and Box 5.

The way Mike put the gun and torch on the chief was almost enough to prove Mr. Einstein right when he said there isn't any time at all!

It pleased the chief.

"Have you seen Sergeant French?" he asked.

"I met him two hours ago at the other end of my post," said Mike.

Then he turned to look into the window of Tony Raub's office.

Chief Bentley naturally looked in, too.

Tony's office is about shoulder high from the ground. The windows run down to the floor, the front door is of glass. The office is empty except for the furniture. There's a high stool standing behind a high desk, a few chairs, a typewriter table, a flat-top desk that's on short stilts to give the mop a clear swing under it.

At the back end of these front windows is Tony's big safe, latest model, fire- and burglar-proof, with a 64-candle-power Mazda going full blast right over it and right under a big open-face, self-winding clock that gets its time from Washington every hour.

Tony was strong for that lamp and that safe and that clock.

Ten years before he'd been robbed. They got the blow-off boys, but they didn't get them until they blowed in all Tony's cash. So he put in that new safe, the clock, the lamp, and always left the curtains up, so that any cop could look in; and any cop on that beat always looked in, because Tony always took a full page in the Police Benevolent Association's annual program.

The room looked just as it always looked, even to the shiny dial on the door of the big safe. A safety-pin couldn't have hid in that room.

Mike looked at the clock last. Then he gave a little jump and yanked out his watch. Then he looked at the clock again.

"Holy smoke, chief! I'm almost ten minutes late. What time have you got? My watch must be wrong. The clock says 3:22."

Chief Bentley looked at his watch, then at Tony's clock. Then he grinned sheepishly. "I forgot to wind it, I guess. Anyway, it's run down. However, if you get in Dutch with the desk lieutenant on your next ring I'll help you out by explaining to him."

"Thanks, chief." Away loped Mike. Bentley began fishing for his cigar, same as he'd been doing before Mike ran into him, found it, pulled it out, frisked himself for

a match, lighted it, and stood sniffing the smell of the tobacco and that of some new cedar posts that Tony Raub had just got in.

When he looked at the clock again it was 3:30. He walked around the corner of the office, which sat square with the street, through the lumberyard, still thinking of Mike and how he'd have to step out to make Box 5 at his next ring due at 3:50. Box 5 was at the corner of Jefferson avenue and the cemetery, more than a mile away in a bee-line, but Mike had to weave in and out of some side streets and a little park or two, if he covered that beat as he always did.

From the back end of the lumberyard Chief Bentley emerged into Elm avenue. He walked a few steps and then looked up the hill. It was a nice, clear June night. At the top of the hill he could easily see Patrolman Jack Hampton's torch flashing as he went around the schoolhouse, which he had to inspect as he worked downhill on his beat.

Bentley left Elm avenue, crossed into a side street and kept idly strolling along toward headquarters. He came in at just 3:48, and Lieutenant Brown had time for a salute before the board fluttered a call and he plunged in.

"Hello! Gilroy. O.K.—What's that?—The chief is here now. Want to talk to him?—Oh, he'll explain, eh. All right. What? No, I ain't heard any explosion.—Where?—Oh, you didn't hear it, eh? Just the flash? Where?—Over toward Councilman Jackson's house? Hey, wait a minute."

Lieutenant Brown took reports from four other cops before he cut back on Gilroy's wire. None of them had seen a flash or heard a sound. Then he told Mike it might have been a fuse on the electric railroad wire. Every cop in Bluevale on duty was likewise on tick. No one else saw the flash. Then Brown turned to Bentley.

"What was it Mike wanted you to explain for him, chief?"

"He thought he was a little late. I was talking to him down in front of Tony Raub's office. I told him I'd square it with you if he was late."

Chief Bentley then and there remembered to wind his watch, and he set it by the headquarters clock.

Then he said good-night to Brown and walked home. It was still a nice, clear summer night. Plenty of space still in Bluevale, pretty well sprinkled with Junebugs and hoptoads. Mrs. Bentley's flowers in the front yard nodded as if they, too, knew there was time enough for another nap before morning.

Bluevale, in short, was as lovely in her June dress as any girl graduate or bride the town ever turned out. Not an automobile in sight or hearing, not a soul abroad except the cops, and every one of them on the job just where they ought to be.

At eight-thirty next morning while Chief Bentley was still pounding his head in bed somebody rapped on the door. Mrs. Bentley said:

"Lieutenant Brown is here."

"Send him in," said her husband. "Good-morning, Lieutenant, what's on your mind?"

"Well, chief, I thought I'd better run up and tell you than spill it to everybody in town by phone before you look at Tony Raub's safe, which was blown and robbed last night."

"What time?" asked Bentley, sitting up.

"According to the clock above the safe, it must have been at exactly 3:30 a. m. The explosion stopped it."

Right then Bloomingdale Asylum's Queen of Sheba almost earned a good pal in the chief.

CHAPTER TWO

IT was Detective Joe Dunn's day off that morning, and when Bentley phoned his house he didn't even know what day of the week it was and why Joe didn't answer instead of Mrs. Dunn, who explained that Joe was at his sister's; that his sister was a widow with some kids; that Joe was the volunteer guardian for the kids; that he always took his day off by going over to see that the kids learned their lessons. She added that Jimmie, the oldest, was in high

school when he wasn't in somebody's watermelon patch, and she didn't know whether Joe was at the house or not, but she'd go right over and see. And all this time lost because the chief didn't want to spill the robbery over the telephone any more than Brown did.

Before Joe's wife arrived her detective husband had his nephew "on the carpet." Jimmie had to come clean with his report card, which his cop-uncle studied as if it was thumb-prints in some rogue's gallery. It was "fair." Then a 96 mark caught his eye.

"What's that for?" said he.

"Physics," said Jimmie.

Joe choked back a "what's them?" He had very little schooling. He was foxy, though, so he said:

"Tell me what you learned, Jimmie, that got you that good mark."

"Well, one thing I was perfect in was time. Galileo and some other men figured out things about falling bodies and time," said Jimmie, desperately trying to alibi with an old Italian for a recent watermelon raid. "If it wasn't for Galileo the clocks wouldn't run right."

"How was that?"

Jimmie leaped into a discourse on pendulums; how they would shrink in cold weather, make the clock tick too fast, or lengthen in summer, and vice versa. Before Joe could get the vice versa without "tippin' his mitt" to his smart rascal of a nephew Mrs. Dunn arrived, cut short the quiz and thus stopped Jimmy's expected spanking for plugging baby watermelons in their cribs.

Instead Joe gave Jimmie a half-dollar to take his sister to a dog-and-pony show, billed to arrive next day, and hot-hoofed it to his own house, where he phoned Bentley, who by then was babbling incoherently about "time."

On his way to the station Joe compared his watch with the time on the big regulator in Jeweler Giolitti's window. It tallied to a second, and he grinned at the pendulum and the dial.

On the way to Tony Raub's with Joe the chief told just what had happened to him the night before. At Raub's they looked things over. The safe door hung by one hinge, but there wasn't a mark on it outside. Not a drill-mark, not a chisel-scar, no thumb-prints even under the big magnifying-glass, no print of the feet of the "little old-man drag" that is sometimes used to yank the "lid" from some old cheese-box. Besides, no such bewhiskered device could have been applied, for the new safe was built flush with the wall, there was nothing to "drag" but the handles, and they didn't have a rough mark, either.

In spite of all of which that safe had been blown open.

Chief Bentley was sure that if he was in his right senses it had been blown without being drilled, it had been blown while he was looking at it and without a sound. There wasn't a sign of how the crook had got in. The only sign there was of a crook was that Tony Raub had put six thousand dollars in that safe the night before—or rather the afternoon—and there wasn't a nickel of it in sight now.

Bentley turned to him.

"Why didn't you put it in the bank, Tony?"

"You forget, chief," whispered Joe Dunn, "that yesterday was Saturday."

Chief Bentley rubbed his head.

"You're right, Joe. But, dog my cats——"

Joe winked at him. Then Bentley remembered that Tony didn't know he had been there the night before. He "buttoned up." Joe asked Tony how his clock ran.

"It's got to run right," said Tony.

"Oh, no," smiled Joe. "It might gain a little or lose a little, you know, if the pendulum——"

"That clock ain't got any more pendulum than I have an appendix," said Tony Raub, "and Doc Goldwyn can show you mine in a bottle."

Joe had to laugh in spite of Chief Bentley's strained look.

"Did your clock get appendicitis because you got it, Tony?"

"It never had a pendulum. That clock runs with a magnet. It ain't got any insides at all hardly. Mostly hands. It's controlled by that big telegraph regulator at

Washington—same's the clock over on the public library."

The plaster was caved away above the safe a little, and Joe went over and peeked up behind the dial. It was true. He could see the little magnet. The wires were intact, save where they had been ripped off by the blast when the door of the safe came tumbling out.

Joe turned to look at the safe.

This was the most mysterious job he had ever heard of.

If Chief Bentley was telling the truth and that clock controlled from Washington didn't lie, then from all the mute but incontrovertible evidence the safe must have been robbed by an invisible crook who worked from the inside out, and in no time at all.

Unless, that is, Tony Raub had done it himself, and even if he had that didn't prove much against Tony except he was wasting his time in the lumber business if he could crack "a box" that way as a steady habit. Joe concluded that if Tony was a suspect it would be a wase of time to talk to him just then.

He winked to the chief, and they walked out together.

"Well, Joe?"

"I was just thinking of this here guy Einstein."

"Arnstein?" said the chief. "But Nicky don't work that way; they ain't proved he ever was in on any job at all yet, have they?"

"Einstein—not Arnstein," said Joe.

"Oh. I never heard of him. Is he a peter-man?"

"The lad that turned this trick looks almost as clever as I hear this Einstein is," said Joe, "and this job would be duck soup for him. I ain't got much education, but I can count time on a clock's face. You said this here clock was runnin'?"

"Between the time Mike looked at it, which was 3:22, and the time I looked at it again, the minute hand moved to 3:30. There wasn't any one in there to move it. Leastwise I didn't see anybody. If the safe blew open then it must have busted before I got around the corner of the building. How come I didn't hear it?"

"If it went off in no time at all," said Joe sagely, "then nobody heard it, because it takes some time to hear anything."

"By golly, you're right, Joe. No, you ain't, either. Wait a minute. Where's Gilroy now?"

"Why, if Mike's following his usual Sunday program, he's hittin' the hay after going to church, and he'll be taking a walk with his best girl this evening before he goes on duty. What about Patrolman Gilroy?"

"His watch was wrong, or the clock was wrong last night," said Chief Bentley. "Now, Joe, if we could figure out which was which—mebbe—oh, hang it all, what difference would that make? I was standing there, and I'd have to swear, if any one asked me, I saw that clock hit 3:30—right in plain view!"

He took off his hat and wiped his perspiring brow with a hand that trembled.

"Don't worry, chief. We'll get that bird. He must have new feathers on him, and somebody'll spot him sooner or later, even if he ain't in our town. The pitcher keeps going back to the well, you know. Anyhow, Gilroy lives with Mrs. Gilhooly, about six blocks from here. Now, my watch is right. What d'ye say if we go up and compare it with his? By the way, how's your watch this morning?"

Chief Bentley pulled his timepiece. It agreed with Joe's to within six seconds. They walked to Gilroy's boarding-house. Mike was sleeping like a cherub. His watch lay on the stand by the head of his bed. Just as Bentley went to pick it up Mike popped out of bed and twisted his arm.

The watch fell to the floor.

CHAPTER THREE

BENTLEY went down, too. Then Mike got "the sticks out of his eyes" and apologized for what he had done.

"I was dreamin' of two burglars that walked in on me——"

He stopped. Joe Dunn had meanwhile stooped and picked up the watch. It wasn't running. He shook it vigorously. It gave

a tick or two and then died. Joe laid it back on the stand.

"Are you sure you was dreamin', Mike?" he asked gently.

Mike returned his steady stare with one as unwavering.

"I ain't sure of much except I think I just saw you shakin' my watch," said he almost truculently. "But I was asleep when you come in here; wait a minute. I thought I was dreamin', mebbe, but mebbe I wasn't, because you *did* come in, didn't you—just before I got out of bed?"

The detective nodded.

"The chief had just started to pick up your watch," said he. Mike looked from one to the other. There was a moment of awkward silence. Then Bentley coughed nervously.

"Mike, where did I meet you last night?"

"You didn't meet me. You was standing by Tony Raub's office when I come around the corner."

"Yes, I was. Do you remember what happened afterward?"

"Sure I remember. I pulled my gun and torch and put 'em both on you before I knew it was you. I took you for a crook."

Bentley winced.

"So you did, Mike," he replied gently. "Now, what next happened, as you remember?"

"You laughed and asked me if I'd met Sergeant French. I told you I met him two hours before at the other end of my post." He detailed the rest of the incident with almost microscopic exactness, concluding with: "Is anything wrong on my beat, chief?"

Joe Dunn replied after he had winked to his plainly worried superior:

"Yes. But you've got an eight- or ten-minute alibi, if your watch was right. Do you know whether or not it was right?"

Gilroy looked from one to the other. He was young, he was Irish, and he was just out of a sound sleep.

"I never needed an alibi in me life," said he semi-explosively. "I don't know what this is all about, but let them that needs alibis have all of 'em. As for my watch being right or wrong, I don't know. I was going to take it to Giolitti's to-morrow. But to-morrow he won't know what ailed it last night, since it got that bump."

"I guess you're right, Mike," said Joe with another wink to Bentley. "Now, the chief didn't think of coming up to look at your watch. It was me that thought of it, and the chief only happened to pick it up first."

Mike looked from one to the other again, a little mystified, a little suspicious, not at his visitors particularly, but at things in general.

"I don't know what's come off," said he. "If anything happened, it didn't happen while I was around." Having been trained in a New York police school, Patrolman Mike did not again ask what had happened. He just waited.

Joe Dunn smiled. "The worst thing that has happened," said he in that slow, easy-going, common-sense way that he never failed to exhibit, "is that somebody stole—or else somebody else has mislaid—about ten minutes of time last night. Now, Mike, don't worry. Don't tell anybody that we called. Have your nap out, get your watch fixed to-morrow, and just go on as usual. If anybody asks you anything, you don't know anything."

Gilroy nodded.

"I never talk police business to anybody except police officers, and they have got to be my superiors to get me to talk then. Lientenant Brown spoke to me about meeting the chief last night."

Bentley pricked up his ears. This was a new one on him.

"When?" he asked.

"Why, at 8 o'clock, when I reported in at the station, this morning."

"What did he say to you?"

"He just said 'Mike, better put down on your report that you met the chief last night and talked with him and when and where you met him. I did that. It's all on the report."

"This eight or ten minutes of time," said Joe Dunn in his matter-of-fact manner, just as if Brown's name hadn't been mentioned at all, "was probably stole—that is, if it

wasn't mislaid by somebody in Bluevale—by an invisible man, Mike."

"What kind of a man is an invisible man?" demanded Gilroy as he pulled the quilts up around his chin.

"The kind of a man that you dream about," said Joe. "You can't see him when you wake up—not always. If you happen to wake up when he's there, sometimes you can grab him, just as you grabbed the chief when he was picking up your watch."

Mike grinned.

"You're trying to kid me," said he.

Joe shook his head gravely.

"Time isn't visible. The clocks don't make it visible. They only measure it. Now, if this ten minutes was stolen, then it must have been an invisible man that took it, see?"

"It's a cinch, then," yawned Mike, "that it wasn't the chief nor you nor me that took it, for I can see both of you, and by cranin' me head like this I can see meself in the mirror over in the corner beyant."

They were on the street again when Chief Bentley turned a bewildered but much less strained face toward Joe Dunn.

"I've known you, boy and man, for more than thirty years, Joe. In all that time I ain't heard you talk the way you did to Mike. What's all that nonsense about an invisible man stealing time?"

"Chief, if we ever get the clever lad that pulled this, we've got to forget common sense and think nonsense. It ain't common sense for you to tell me that you stood and looked at a safe that was being blowed open right before your eyes and didn't do nothing about it, is it?"

"It sure ain't."

"Well, neither of us is what educated folks would call clever. I ain't had much education. You had more than I did. But we can both add. Now, if you was there at 3:30 o'clock this morning, and that safe was evidently blowed then—and from the inside, remember—then you'd have either got groggy from the blast, or you'd have sent in an alarm and got busy. You was there at 3:30—and you wasn't there at 3:30. If I talked nonsense to Mike about an invisible man, you talked worse nonsense to me before I talked to him. Is it common sense for the chief of police of Bluevale to see a thing and not see it? Is it common sense for him to be in two places at once?"

"Joe, I'm pretty near crazy over this already. I admit all you say. But there ain't no use of your going to Bloomingdale with me!"

"They ain't got this here guy Einstein in Bloomingdale, not yet," said Joe sturdily.

"Einstein? Ain't that a foreign name?"

"Lay off'n him," warned Joe. "Yes, he's a Swiss, but he ain't never been in Bluevale. Some things he's said have been in the New York papers that come into Bluevale, and that's why I mentioned his name. He can prove to you that you ain't where you think you are; that you can be in two places at once and not know you're in either. He's got a wicked headlock on this here fourth dimension. I got a lot of newspaper clippings up at the house in which him and some other guys that understand him can make it all plain to you."

"My hands are up," said Bentley meekly. "Lead me to the clippings, Joe."

"Before I do I'm going to pull a little of his stuff myself. Let's compare watches again." They did. There was no appreciable alteration in time. "Now," continued Detective Dunn, "it's just noon. So eight o'clock to-night ain't here yet, is it?"

Chief Bentley admitted that he couldn't see it if it was.

"Just the same," said the veteran detective with his homely, reassuring smile, "since I'm now out in the fourth dimension myself, and looking for an invisible man that stole Tony Raub's six thousand bucks while you was and wasn't looking at him work, I'm going to forget Tony and think about Mike's sweetheart, Bridget O'Hare.

"To-night, about eight o'clock—and me now being an invisible man, like the guy that pulled this job—there'll be an explosion in Bridget's poor little heart. She'll be busted up as bad as Tony Raub's safe, but for a different reason. Chief, that was awful powerful soup that lad used, but not near as strong as Mike's feelin' for Bridget."

"Mike wasn't there when the box was

blown. When I got into the station at 3:48 it was just before Mike was ringing from Box 5," replied Bentley.

"Did you talk to Mike yourself?" asked Joe Dunn.

"No."

"Could you swear in court that anybody was talkin' to Brown?"

"Er—er—no. But I could hear Lieutenant Brown talk to Mike."

"Chief, we ain't never going to git this invisible man by chasin' our own tail. Let's lay off'n him for a while. Lemme show you why."

"Shoot, Joe."

"Why, that's duck soup. Mike might not really have been talkin' from Box 5. You didn't see him there. Any wire in Bluevale, police or public or private telephone, would turn the trick. Suppose instead Brown was just talkin' to himself, and not to Mike? Suppose they was both in on this job and Mike talked to Brown from any other phone before you got in? What's to hinder? According to what you tell me, they had eighteen minutes."

Bentley stared.

"You said a mouhtful, Joe. Why, I never thought of that, and I hate to think of that kind of an alibi, even for myself. Mike's gallop away might have been a bluff. He could have come back and covered the job and the get-away. That would explain what he said to Brown—the flash and the explosion. That might be *their* alibi, eh?"

"It might and it might not," answered the detective. "It's all a guess. We may both be guessing wrong. But if you and me is guessing right on that part of it, so far at least, that don't explain the clock part, does it?"

Bentley glared. "It all hinges on Brown. He'd know if Mike was really at Box 5, of course. But——"

"Brown," interrupted Joe Dunn remorselessly, "come to your house to tell you of the robbery to keep it quiet. Did Brown tell you who told him about the robbery?"

Bentley reddened. "Joe, I was so upset when he told me the time it seemed to have happened that I never thought to ask for details."

"Just as well. Brown told Mike to put it down on his report that he'd met you. Brown must put down in his report who told him the safe was blowed. Now, stick a pin in this: Brown didn't know you was going to be down at Tony Raub's. Neither did any one else. You didn't know it yourself, did you?"

"No, Joe. I was just rambling around. Couldn't sleep."

"Then, whether Brown or Mike are in on this job, or whether they aren't in on it, whoever pulled it didn't know you'd be there, either."

"That," said Bentley with more spirit, "is one thing I'm sure about." He came out of his reverie. "Why, here we are at your house."

"Score a run for Mr. Einstein," grinned Joe Dunn. "It seems just a second ago you was down in Tony Raub's lumberyard looking in that window. You were also here. Don't that prove you could be in two places at once?"

Chief Bentley walked in. He did not see much. He was back again in Patrolman Mike Gilroy's room listening to him say he didn't need an alibi and "let them that needs alibis have all of them."

It certainly looked as if Mike's alibi was so good, owing to his own accidental presence near Tony Raub's, that the chief needed the alibi worse than Mike. That is, unless Joe Dunn could find a way to get at the bottom of this involved mess by his usual dogged, matter-of-fact, hard-headed way of making complex things look simple.

CHAPTER FOUR

DETECTIVE DUNN pulled out a big, fat, well-worn Turkish rocker, a footstool with it, and made Bentley take off his coat and sit down in it. He produced a nifty vertical brass ash-tray carrying matches and some choice cigars.

Then he handed over the fat bunch of newspaper clippings.

"Chief, whenever I sit down and try to figure these out, my head generally just

swells up like a bag on a vacuum cleaner. But once in a while I strike an idea that I can understand enough of to quit trying to read it. You know, chief, you can't take your Einstein straight, like you once could your whisky. If you don't want to get red-headed and gray-headed both to once, you got to first read what some of the rest of the guys that say they understand him have printed about space and time. Here's one clippin' that I started to read. Then I quit the bird that wrote it; quit him cold!"

Joe Dunn gravely passed over a bunch of clippings pinned together, and then slipped over to the door, while Chief Bentley glanced at a paragraph of the topmost one, which was underscored with a lead pencil. It read thus:

"The entire past, present and future of time . . . might be spread out, all at once, in space without there being anything to change . . . even in the language of common sense."

Before he could read further the detective spoke from the kitchen door:

"Chief, Mrs. Dunn has got a nice dinner all ready. What do you say? If there isn't no such thing as time or space, have you got time enough to eat and space enough to tuck it away in? This is the first time in all the time that we've been workin' together that you was ever in our house on a Sunday, thanks to an invisible yegg!"

Bentley laid down the clippings and rose with a broad grin.

"It's sure a comfort to hear you talk nonsense instead of my trying to read it," he answered.

After they sat down Mrs. Dunn passed the guest a bowl of soup. He took one sip, remarking: "My, but that's good!"

"Chalk up one black mark against Mr. Einstein," chortled Joe. "Mrs. Dunn has been makin' just as good onion soup for a long time. If there ain't no such things as space and time, then there wouldn't be anywheres to grow onions and no time to grow 'em in. Chief, if Mrs. Dunn had cooked for them there European kings, she sure would have helped win the world war."

Chief Bentley echoed the sentiment and called for a second bowl of onion soup. Thereafter Joe and he continued to refute the clippings with roast pork and applesauce, baked potatoes, mashed turnips, three cups of tea apiece, and then proved that the fourth dimension of each was in his stomach instead of where it ought to be, with an old-fashioned rice-custard pudding bursting with raisins.

Bentley's feeling of high tension had vanished as he sat down in the chair to glance again at the clippings, while Joe stepped out to talk to his nephew, who had just come over.

His eye fell on another paragraph scored by his host with the pencil.

"The absolute world is of so different a nature that the real world with which we are acquainted seems like a dream. But if we are dreaming, our concern is with the boundless fabric of our vision."

The paragraph carried him backward to Mike Gilroy. Again he seemed to live over the scene in Mrs. Gilhooly's boarding-house.

Mike had professed to be asleep and dreaming of burglars when Joe and he had come in.

Chief Bentley liked Mike, yet he wondered if Mike had been telling the truth when he had leaped from the bed and grasped his wrist just as he picked up Mike's watch.

The statement might be true, or, again, it might be as ingenious a falsehood as Joe had hinted the apparent conversation might have been which Lieutenant Brown seemed to be carrying on with Mike in the station the night before.

The more he thought on it the more Bentley was unable to determine whether Mike was or was not "dreamin' of burglars," as he said.

It might be either a true statement or a false one, for Bentley remembered when a boy how he had himself once dreamed of catching a big fish in his hands; how he had been afraid it was "all a dream," but determined to hold on to the fish anyway, and

how he had wakened to find himself clutching part of the thick quilt.

He smiled ruefully.

The next thing he knew the room was very dark, save for a pencil of light where the door was ajar. He rose, stretched, yawned and walked from the sitting-room into the dining-room. From the little clock on the mantel he must have slept at least seven and a half hours, a thing he hadn't done in years before.

He shoved the clippings into his coat pocket, then he walked on into the kitchen.

His wife was there, chatting with Mrs. Dunn.

"What's this? Where's Joe?" he demanded.

His wife smiled. "Oh, Joe left a note for you after sending his nephew, Jimmie, to our house to get me to take supper with Mrs. Dunn. Said it would be a shame to wake you. He's been back once and gone away again."

Bentley opened the note.

"DEAR CHIEF: No use in spoiling the sleep two bowls of onion soup give you. Besides, if Einstein is right and there ain't no such things as time and space, we got plenty of nothing on which to keep working. Please stay at my house to-night and to-morrow lay off'n everybody. Bridget blowed up just as I told you she would. I never sent her a word nor did I bother Mike. That was real fourth dimension stuff. You didn't see Mrs. Gilhooly standing on the stairs while we was in Mike's room this morning. Neither did I, but I seen her reflection in Mike's looking-glass. So I let her get an earful to lug over to Bridget, seein' how she's Mike's landlady. Now, you must have lost at least ten minutes of time last night somewheres. They control time at Washington for Tony Raub's clock. That's why I locked up Tony before starting for Atlantic City. Keep away from Tony until I get back on the 10:30 train to-morrow. If I ain't on it I'll be in your office sooner or later. Wait for me. JOE."

CHAPTER FIVE

DOING as Joe requested, "lay off'n everybody," was almost as hard next morning as trying to figure out how an invisible man could apparently blow a safe on the tick of the clock while Chief Bentley had been looking at both—or thought he had—which is the same thing, until you can be sure that it isn't.

Bluevale boasted two aspiring daily papers, each of which had already started to "wake up the town" by getting out extras announcing the sensational robbery and that Tony Raub was in jail. Chief Bentley's house was in a state of siege all the morning. Reporters of both papers were demanding admittance, declaring the chief was where he wasn't, thus proving Mr. Einstein partially correct again in some things, even if Joe had proved him utterly at fault with respect to the onion soup, whose soporific qualities had sent the chief into a dreamland so deep that he couldn't remember he had dreamed at all.

When Chief Bentley and his wife left Joe Dunn's he even took along a raw onion. "Joe says they're soothing to his nerves when he smokes too much," explained his worthy spouse.

So when the frantic rival local reporters, reinforced by several city sleuths who were "crime-waving" in Gotham papers for a livelihood, invaded his office, Chief Bentley gave them all his cigars and ate the onion as if it was an apple to keep from answering their questions.

"Gentlemen," said he when the last vestige of the vegetable had disappeared, "I may issue a statement for publication later on in the day."

"Why not now?" demanded one insistent youth. "We've got to beat time, because most of us are on the afternoon papers. This mystic stuff that you chaps always pull——"

"Time?" echoed Bluevale's police head. "My dear sir, I'm surprised that you should speak in such an ignorant manner. You look intelligent."

He solemnly took out Joe Dunn's clippings. "You may look these over," said he,

"but you must not take them out of this office. Mr. Einstein shows plainly there's no such things as space or time."

"Do you think he's right?" demanded another youth whose pencil was flying fast and furious.

"He's mistaken about onion soup," gravely replied Bentley. "In some things—well, who am I to criticize the scientist? He may be wrong. If you young men have any arguments to advance that will prove him wrong I'll take great pleasure in listening to them. But it will cost you an onion every ten minutes."

That procured him a little peace. Journalists must send news. These boys mostly worked on space. They flocked back from the local telegraph office just as Chief Bentley got into his car and started to the railway station. They were after him like the pack behind a fox.

There was no sign of Joe on the 10:30 train. Chief Bentley drove back to his office. He found the door locked. He rapped on it. The massed reporters surged forward. The detective opened it wide enough to let the chief squeeze in through the space.

"I crossed 'em," said Joe, "so I come back from New York in a machine. I knowed when I jugged Tony Raub that they'd be down like a bevy of wolves. Now, just listen. Can you listen? Are your nerves less jumpy?"

"Haven't smoked once to-day and have eaten one onion. Shoot, Joe."

"Well, chief, I'll try to hold this down simple. You know there's only one way to look at a thing. You gotta look at it one idea at a time. You can't think but one thing at a time. Then when you let that go, you gotta think another idea. That's where most folks get mixed up. They think they see something. Mebbe they do, mebbe they only think they do. Anyway, if they think they do, when they don't, that starts 'em thinking so fast that they think a whole lot more things that ain't so than is so sometimes."

Bentley nodded.

"Where do we begin, Joe?"

"Call the turnkey on the phone and have him bring up Tony Raub, while I give them reporters the high-sign."

Presently Tony was brought in. He did not look either downcast or sullen. Joe waved him to a chair facing the chief, while the reporters peered into the room. Then he placed pen and ink before his superior. Next he walked to the door and said:

"Gentlemen, as Chief Bentley has told you already, later in the day he'll have a statement—maybe—for you to publish. At present, as you can see with your own eyes, Mr. Anthony Raub, the man what was robbed, is goin' to have a nice, confidential talk with Mr. Bentley."

"Meaning the third degree?" shouted one soporific scribe far back in the crowd.

"You might call it the third degree according to Einstein," grinned Joe Dunn, "seein's how Chief Bentley is now about to jump into this here fourth dimension or back out of it; it all depends on what happens in here. We've been workin' on the theory that an invisible man turned this trick, and we've made one arrest, as you know, from the blotter. That's all for now."

He closed the door and locked it from within, while the scribes sprinted back to the telegraph office, blessing the name of the gentleman who first started the idea that time and space were myths, thus enabling these sturdy young skeptics to prove him wrong in both cases and in their pay envelopes.

Joe Dunn sat down next to Tony Raub.

"What denomination was that six thousand bucks in, Tony?" he asked.

"Why, Joe, there was six five-hundred-dollar bills, one of a thousand; the rest was in hundreds and fifties, aside from some twenties and tens and fives that I took in at the yard. I had some checks, too, but they wasn't in my safe."

"Could you identify this money?"

"I think so, Joe. The thousand-dollar bill had the face of Thomas Jefferson on it, if I remember right. It was the first one I had ever seen in all my life."

"Chief," said Joe Dunn, "will you please write out a receipt for Anthony Raub to sign, identifying that there money, but don't

ask him to sign it until we have got the guy that took it into court, and Tony has identified the money in court for evidence. Tony, lamp this wad, and see if you ever had it in your safe."

He tossed an obese flat bundle of currency toward the astonished owner of the lumberyard, who fell on it with a cry of incredulous joy.

"Here's Thomas Jefferson," said he, pointing at a bill.

"Put down all them statements," said Joe gravely to Chief Bentley. "Then put that jack where it'll be ready for evidence when we want it. Beat it, Tony. The insurance men and safe experts are probably in the third round, fightin' for the Kilkenny cat championship down at your place by now, and them reporters are fleet-footed birds."

"Thanks, a million times, Joe. Good-by, chief. See you later on. This was fast and elegant work. I'll say our Bluevale cops have the world skinned."

Joe let him out of the door and relocked it behind him.

Chief Bentley looked wordlessly at the money and then at Joe.

"I'm an onion," finally said his superior, "and dreaming again. It ain't real."

"It does look queer, just as the marked clippings said," returned Joe, lighting a fresh cigar. "Well, if you're dreamin' we all are. Looky here." He dragged out another soiled clipping from his pocket. "I meant to show you this one, too, yesterday up to my house, but you run out on me too quick with the sand man."

Bentley took the bit of soiled paper.

"For in and out, above, about, below,
'Tis nothing but a magic shadow-show
Boxed in the box whose candle is the sun,
Round which we phantom figures come and go."

Joe retrieved and replaced it in his pocket.

"There's five dimensions. Count 'em. In, out, about, above, below. Now we go from Mr. Einstein's fourth dimension into the fifth. The fifth is about. We been in the other four—in, out, above, below. It's about time we let Mr. Einstein drop into the laps of the reporters, ain't it, and get down to plain, hard facts?"

"With all my heart, Joe," said the relieved Bluevale chief.

CHAPTER SIX

"CHIEF," said Joe, "I don't know my Einstein, but I do know I can add time. And I'm ready to bet an onion I can show you that Gilroy and Brown are as straight as you are and didn't have anything to do with this job. That's the first idea. Listen."

His superior smiled happily and relaxed.

"Do you remember when Mike twisted your arm and his watch dropped to the floor?"

"My wrist remembers, Joe."

"Well, I remembered to look at it before I shook it. You just follow this idea of time, one step at a time, like you was learnin' to walk, will you?"

"All the way you lead me."

"Mike thought his watch was ten minutes slow when you met him. You looked at Tony's clock with him. It was 3:22 a. m. by that clock. Mike hustled up to Box No. 5. You didn't set your watch by that clock. You took a smoke. You set it by the station-house clock. You left Tony's at 3:30 by that clock. You got into the station at 3:48 by headquarters time. Mike phoned. You set your watch and went home. When they told me of the job and I come downtown, I compared my watch with Giolitti's. My watch was on the identical second with his regulator. Is that all clear?"

"Very clear."

"Now, get this: Giolitti's clock is also on that Washington time circuit and so is the one on the public library. My watch agreed with his clock. Your watch agreed with mine within six seconds, but the station-house clock is not on that circuit. Understand?"

"Perfectly."

"Keep on answering that way or you'll get muddled. Think just one thing at a

time. Next, think this: Your watch and my watch was close together on Sunday morning. Stop right there. Now, one more step. I said to you, 'Let's go up and look at Mike's watch and compare it with ours.' Remember?"

"Yes."

"Mike's watch stopped when it hit the floor—but not quick enough for me to keep from seein' that it was three seconds faster than my watch and three seconds slower than your watch. Now, add that up first. Here's three police watches. They're all within six seconds. One was set by station-house time, one by the same Washington time that was on Tony Raub's clock, for Giolitti's regulator is on that circuit, and my watch agreed with it Sunday forenoon after the robbery."

Bentley nodded. He seemed fascinated.

"That," said Joe Dunn, "proves Mike told you the truth when he said his watch was ten minutes slow the night before. How? Tony Raub's clock was ten minutes too fast. Lemme take you that mighty hard and mighty easy step, chief."

"Hard and easy, Joe?"

"You're in both places at once. Here's Mike's report. Read that, which proves he was at Box 5 when he telephoned."

Bentley read the part at which Joe Dunn pointed:

"Corner Jefferson Avenue at Cemetery.

"Saw a yellowish-red flash, apparently from windows of Councilman Jackson's house, just as I approached Box No. 5. Looked at my watch; time by my watch 3:49 a. m. But my watch must be ten minutes slow, for the clock on the Public Library, which I can see from here, now marks 3:59. Notified Lieutenant Brown of flash, asked if explosion heard. None heard, he said."

"That much is enough," said Joe. "Now, chief, the clock on the public library is also on the same Washington time wire. Tell me next who lives across the road from Councilman Jackson?"

"Giovanni Giolitti."

Joe Dunn held up a warning palm. "No suspicions. Stop just there. Remember I'm still leadin' you. Now, chief, why is it that Mike phoned in just on the dot from Box 5, according to his time, which I've now showed you was true station-house time and true to my time, unless Tony Raub's clock was ten minutes fast when both you and he looked at it?"

"It's simple, but it's true, Joe."

"It's a cinch, chief. Mike didn't leave Tony's at 3:22, as you both thought he did. He left at 3:12. He was on time. He always is. The thief had the clock fixed to get him to hurry away, thinkin' he was late. You didn't leave at 3:30. You left at 3:20. Easy, I'm still leadin'."

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE detective smiled, rolled his cigar to the other side of his mouth, and went on:

"After I added that up I took another taste of the duck soup while you was sleepin' off the onion soup. I says: 'I'm an invisible man meself. I'm goin' to rob Tony Raub's safe. But I gotta git that smart young cop, Gilroy, out of the way and also turn the trick before Jack Hampton gets down the hill near enough to hear the blow-off. How'll I do it? Well, I'll pipe off that Gilroy first and figure out a way.' Can you see me as an invisible man, chief?"

"Right behind you, Joe."

"Well, I went down there to see how I'd make myself invisible. There was a nice place where I could see that clock all the time—just acrost the street where that railroad sidin' runs in. There was a pile of cedar posts. I went back there behind 'em and had a look at the clock. Fine view, chief. Then I looked down at where I'd stood Saturday morning at 3:12 true time and 3:22 phony time. I seen my own tracks."

Bentley gasped. "You did?"

"Plain as day, for while I was invisible behind the posts I was also wearin' rubber heels with the word 'safety' stamped on

'em, seein's I didn't want to be unsafe. But I didn't know Chief Bentley would be there. That made me nervous. I walked around and around for as much as eight minutes, and just left a lot of visible and unsafe footprints after I took all that trouble."

"The fellow was watching me all that time?" asked Bentley.

"He sure was. He was behind you and time was ahead of you, which it never can be, of course, although it looked that way. Now, chief, just walk a little faster with me. This clever lad had to make clocks wrong that morning that seemed to be run by Uncle Sam, and he had to make 'em right later on that same morning so's Uncle Sam wouldn't get onto it."

"Joe, you're a wizard."

"No, I'm only a man that's getting older every day. Well, I seen Tony Raub just then. I told him I wanted him to stand for a phony pinch for one night so's I could grab an invisible guy that had stole ten minutes of time and mebbe get back some of his money. Tony went like a little major. I did that to fool the clever guy if he was still in Bluevale. I'll say he was clever. He wasn't here when I done it.

"Next I went to see how I'd tamper with that time, without too much trouble. There's only one place it would be easy, chief—across the road from Councilman Jackson's, where Mike seen that flash. So next I go up there. Giolitti's regulator clock has got a pendulum. The others is mostly hands and a magnet. His is the local master-clock on our Washington time circuit."

He paused. "And then?" Bentley's voice quivered with the suspense. This trail was relentlessly simple, but miraculously incredible no less.

"I added things up again after getting up to Giolitti's store. First, this master-clock must have been wrong at 3:12 a. m. Sunday morning and right at 9:25 the forenoon following the robbery, when I compared my watch to it. Did an outa-town thief do it? Did a local thief do it? I added again. The thief, no matter where from, wasn't tryin' to steal time, save as a side line. He was after Tony Raub's jack. He also knew there was big jack in that safe. Add it yourself. I'll wait."

"It foots up all right. Go on, Joe."

"If he was an outa-town man, unless he worked with Giolitti, he'd have to burglarize Giolitti's place twice—once to make the time wrong, once to set it right again. No crook as clever as that would bother to set it right after he had the cash. He'd be gettin' away. Crooks can add as well as cops."

"This invisible one could," agreed his auditor grimly.

"I stand there in the dark addin' away. I added on another thing. This safe was blowed inside out. How? Time must have figured in that, too. For the guy was waitin' to blow it between the time Mike went away and Hampton got down the hill, as I said."

"This is a long trail, Joe, but it's getting hotter every step."

"Sure. The invisible man might keep outa sight forever, but just the same he had only just so much invisible time in which to blow that safe. So he fixed that all up beforehand, and time inside that safe must have been used to fool Tony Raub somehow, just as time outside of it must have been used to fool Mike into running for Box 5."

Bentley was beyond power of speech. He could only stare, with his jaw hanging down, as Joe Dunn continued remorselessly to "add." It was as uncanny as time is invisible, yet measurable.

"Now, chief, when it all adds up into time for a clue, instead of things like a thumb-print, or a bloody knife, or an empty cartridge, or a big sledge, what can a poor cop that can only add do? He don't want to guess. He may guess wrong. But time never guesses. It's always the same. It looks long or short. But it never alters, does it?"

"Never, Joe. There's no guess there."

"Well, it don't wait, either. By the time I had added this far I says: 'What was that flash that Mike said he seen up around here?' I pulled my torch. I was standing in front of the window. The Giolitti shop is closed. I also wondered if I could find another 'safety' heel-print of an invisible

man up here and walked to the corner. If he wasn't Giolitti and wasn't a confederate of Giolitti's, then it wouldn't be there."

"No, an invisible man can't make a mark where he ain't ever been," agreed his pupil oracularly.

"You said a forkful, chief. Now look. I'm beginnin' to add again. I next seen a flash just where Mike seen one. Only not a big flash like he seen. I'm on the corner of the street. The flash is acrost the street in Councilman Jackson's house. It's the reflection of my torch. The hill is steep where the streets meet. Comin' down that steep hill an automobile, for instance, would throw its headlight right against the Jackson house windows. That's what Mike seen. His police report reads: 'Yellowish-red flash.' Giolitti's got them kind of lenses on his car. I next walk to the curb. His tire tread is there—on the wrong side of the street, according to the horseshoe tread. By the tire tread is another 'safety' heel-print."

"Whoever done it come back to change back the time," said Bentley *sotto voce*.

"And to make his get-away from a place where there'd be no suspicion," amended Joe. "Then around the corner comes Bridget—not quite on time, but, as I told you, hours before, breakin' her heart with cryin'. Mrs. Gilhooly had told her Mike was in trouble. I flashed my torch on her.

" 'I'm an invisible man,' says I. 'I folleyed you through the park. I heard you scoldin' Mike for lally-gaggin' wid another gur-rul and lettin' burglars break open safes on his beat.'

"Bridget bawls harder than ever and asks me to save Mike. I said I'd try, and then asked her where Giolitti was. She don't know. I went inside the house with her and frisked the place. Not a clue. Giolitti's gone. By and by, rummaging in a desk upstairs, I find a postcard from a certain hotel at Atlantic City with a sweet girl's writing on it, dated last Thursday.

"Time again. Couldn't get rid of time nohow in this job. I didn't waste no more time. I lammed down there. Giolitti is there at that hotel. So is his brother-in-law, Mike Roma. My visible-invisible man is still wearing his dangerous safety rubber heels. Ain't changed 'em because no shoe stores open on the boardwalk in Atlantic City on Sunday. He also has in his pocket that identical wad of money you've got right now."

Joe's cigar was out. Chief Bentley reverently tendered a match.

Joe relighted it, puffed and looked out of the window—a sure sign he had something else to say.

"I stuffed 'em both downstairs whilst you and the reporters was over at the railroad station. When I locked up Mike Roma, Tony Raub almost give me heart failure. He called me over to his cell and whispered: 'Mike asked me to keep that one-thousand-dollar bill for him in my safe over Sunday, with his watch and some other valuable stuff that he put in a box.'

" 'Why didn't you tell me that yesterday?' I asked Tony. And he tells me he was afraid, because then I might think that he blowed his own safe to cop the thousand dollars belonging to Mike. 'Besides,' said he, 'you and the chief ran right out of my place while I was making up my mind, just as if you had the thief hanging on a hook up at headquarters.'

"Think of us losin' all that good time, chief. Of course that watch of Mike Roma's was timed to set off the explosive he had hidden in the box. It was to go off inside the safe whilst Giolitti was waiting outside. Now we gotta lose a little more time. Them fly reporters is campin' outside, and I betcha they been harpoonin' you and me all day in the city papers."

He rose briskly, walked to the door, the key rasped in the lock and he threw wide the barrier. Waiting impatiently outside for some evidence of the orthodox police inquisition, the news sleuths realized the absence of Tony Raub for the first time with a corresponding vacancy of countenance.

"Where's the suspect?" asked one of them.

"This here job was pulled by an invisible man," smiled Joe blankly. "Walk right in, and the chief'll tell you the same. Also that he works from the inside outside and in no time at all. When he shows you Tom Jefferson's face on a banknote you can under-

stand how Tom could have been in two places at once."

He kept on out of the room, while bewildered but fascinated young men of assorted dimensions crowded close to scan the recovered money which Chief Bentley permitted them to examine.

When they turned around again Joe Dunn was behind them with two manacled men in charge of a turnkey and a patrolman.

"Allow me to present Mr. John Doe Einstein and Richard Roe Arnstein, his getaway pal. The first is wearin' visible rubber heels marked 'safety,' but dangerous giveaways. Look at the blotter if you don't believe their aliases."

Joe sidestepped the clicking cameras as the flash sheet flared in the dexterous hands of swift-working young men. Giolitti dodged too late. Joe grinned at him.

"You didn't fool time that time, and you didn't fool Chief Bentley as much as you thought you would when you stole ten minutes of time last Saturday night, and you didn't fool me, either, when you reached up after that explosion Sunday morning and turned back the hands of that clock over Tony Raub's safe to make it look as if the explosion had happened at the time when you watched Chief Bentley look into that window."

The reporters gazed uncomprehensively at the detective and at his sullen prisoners.

"That last smart stunt of yours, Giolitti," continued Joe, ere he gestured for their removal, "was what landed me in your lap at Atlantic City. It didn't add up with all the rest of it. Just for that Chief Bentley is arrangin' for you to get a present of a few years in jail."

He turned with his homely smile toward his superior.

"How many minutes is there in twenty years, chief? Or shall we let Giolitti add it up for himself downstairs?"

TWO OLD OFFENDERS IN THE TOILS

LOUIS A. AUSTIN, who said he was a clerk and lived in Tulsa, Okla., and Floyd Nolan, a druggist of Memphis, Tenn., were arrested as suspicious characters recently as they were about to board a train for Chicago, in the Pennsylvania Station, and locked up in police headquarters. The arrest of the two men by Lieutenant James J. Gegan and Detective Sergeants McCoy, O'Hara and Gilbert, created excitement in the station.

The four detectives were watching for incoming Western thieves, and recognized Austin and Nolan, who were hurrying to the train, as old offenders. Lieutenant Gegan and Detective McCoy grabbed Austin and searched him on the platform, while the other detectives seized Nolan.

On Austin, the detectives later told Inspector Coughlin at police headquarters, they found $4,600 in bank notes, and $6,650 worth of Dominion of Canada five and a half per cent. gold bonds of a recent issue. Austin said that he purchased the bonds from a stranger in the station a short time before for $5,000.

After the men were placed in cells, Inspector Coughlin said that both of them had criminal records. Nolan, he said, was a brother of Diggs Nolan, president of a bank in Memphis, who was indicted about a year ago for criminally receiving some of the bonds taken in the hold-up of two messengers of Kean, Taylor & Co., brokers, of this city.

The inspector said that Nolan in 1912 was sent to a Federal prison for nineteen months in connection with a safe blowing in the post-office at Beaumont, Texas, and that in 1915 he and Austin were sentenced to ten years' imprisonment for holding up the National Bank at Houston, Texas. Both men were pardoned in 1919, the inspector added.

'ATMOSPHERE

by Edgar Daniel Kramer

"FINE writing," Blount muttered as he tossed the magazine across the table to McKain. "There is absolutely no getting away from the fact that you can scribble, Mac, but——" He hesitated.

"But what?" McKain demanded, leaning forward, his sensitive face all eagerness, his dreamy eyes questioning.

"You sell your yarns," Blount went on, "but to me, Mac, they don't ring true. Your criminals aren't any different than the run of folks. They——"

"They aren't supposed to be any different," McKain interrupted. "I contend that there is no criminal class as such. I am fully convinced that there is no fundamental difference between the poor devils behind the bars and the folks on the outside looking in. We are all victims of circumstance, molded and shaped by environment. If you and I would change places——"

"Old stuff, Mac; dreams and pure bunk!" Blount contradicted with a show of impatience. "Crooks are crooks because they want to be; just as you are a pen-pusher and I am a lawyer of our own free will. The graft's easy, and they don't want to work. There's a moral kink in them somewhere, a yellow streak.

"That's liable to show in any of us," McKain insisted. "When the test comes the acid may show both you and me far below fourteen karat."

"The trouble with your stuff," Blount snorted and continued, "is that you write about these birds, and yet you don't know them. You picture them as you want them to be, and not as they are. That Colonel O'Grady and Second-story Harry are brothers under the skin makes a sweet noise, but it doesn't mean anything. As an ex-prosecuting attorney and as a practicing lawyer, Mac, I'm bound to tell you that your yarns come about as close to the real thing as New York is to Frisco, and they aren't rubbing elbows, not by a long shot. You write about criminals and prisons, and yet you have had experience with neither. That's my honest-to-goodness opinion of what you write. Your old engine takes the grade, it seems, but it isn't hitting on all six. As a consequence there's something lacking.

"Atmosphere?" McKain suggested.

"Now you've hit it, Mac!" Blount agreed enthusiastically. "If your writing ability were coupled up with the experience of The Curly Bird in that yarn I just read, you would be a knock-out. You would have

them all eating out of your hand. But you haven't gone through that mill, so what's the use of my raving? I'm just wasting good breath, I know. So I'll be trotting along and let you mull over the Solomon stuff I've been spilling. Why do you write about crooks, anyway, Mac?"

"I'm just dead sorry for them," McKain sighed. "As I see it, most of them never had a chance at all."

"Bunk!" Blount snapped as he rose and took his hat and stick.

Although he was tall and heavy, as he crossed the room to the door there was something feline in the man's movements, something sinister and suggestive of hidden evil.

"By the way, Mac," Blount paused with his hand on the door, and a look of cunning crept into his dark eyes, "when do the wedding-bells chime for you and Alice Bawn?"

"What's that?" McKain asked, rousing from his deep study.

"When does the wedding march begin?"

"Not until next summer, I guess," McKain replied. "Alice has not yet set the exact date."

"Don't take my remarks too seriously," Blount laughed as he opened the door. "You're one conscientious workman, Mac, but you should worry whether your tales ring really true or not as long as they bring home the bacon. Cheerio!"

McKain stared at him without hearing what he said.

"With Mac out of the way," Blount was muttering as he went down the hall to the elevator, "I can put this over as easy as pie. He's just fool enough to play right into my hands. I put this idea across, and I think I have the poor boob going. Anyway, we'll see what we'll see."

For more than an hour after Blount had gone McKain sat in his chair with a far-away look in his eyes. Finally he became all energy, bustling through his rooms, ransacking drawers and cupboards, sorting and destroying papers, writing letters far into the morning. The next day he passed many hours in consultation with his attorney.

"This whole business is perfectly inane," Dowling gasped as he folded the last of several legal documents and then snapped a rubber band around them. "This is a most foolish, a most mad undertaking, Mr. McKain. I am old enough to be your father, and I advise you against this step you are contemplating. You are risking altogether too much."

"That makes it all the more interesting," McKain laughed.

"There is no dissuading you?" Dowling queried, shaking his white head dubiously.

"I have made up my mind," McKain replied.

In the dusk he returned to his apartment. After depositing the letters in the mail-chute he meticulously removed all marks of identification from the dark suit he was wearing. Tucking away a shiny new automatic in his hip pocket, he pulled a tweed cap low over his eyes and locked the door behind him. Leaving his keys at the hall desk to be held until called for, he hurried out into the night.

Two hours later, with his coat collar turned up and his cap pulled down, McKain stepped from the shielding shadow of a doorway directly in the path of a pedestrian. With a quick glimpse up and down the street he jostled into the wayfarer.

"What's th' matter, you——"

"Hands up!" McKain ordered, flashing his automatic and poking it into the other's ribs. "Hands up and shut up!"

Instead of obeying the man shouted for help at the top of his lungs and grappled with McKain. They went down together, and the gun, jerked from McKain's hand by the violence of the fall, rattled across the pavement. They fought viciously, biting, clawing, striking. A policeman turned the nearest corner.

"What's th' big idea?" he demanded, tearing the combatants apart and yanking them to their feet disheveled and bleeding. "You birds oughta stage a scrap like this in th' Garden."

"That guy tried to hold me up," McKain's intended victim explained between breaths.

"One o' them stick-up guys, eh?" the offi-

cer snorted as he clicked the handcuffs on McKain. "That's th' ticket, eh?"

The feel of the cold steel bracelets against his flesh sent a sudden shiver of apprehension prickling along McKain's spine, but he said nothing. As they started to the patrol-box in sullen silence the officer caught sight of the revolver and picked it up.

"Yours?" he asked McKain.

McKain nodded.

"This is a new one on me," the officer gasped after he had sent in his call and took time to examine the gun. "This gat's empty! What kind of a stick-up guy are you, anyway? What's——"

Then the patrol clanged up and he was jailed.

A night in the prison was far from pleasant.

"As a favor to me," Blount was speaking in the magistrate's private office the following morning, a few minutes before the opening of court, "hand that guy who is up for attempted highway robbery three years at least. He won't ask for a jury trial or I miss my guess. He'll put it up to you. There's too much of that kind of stuff going on, and you ought to make an example of this bird. Soak him. He's on the docket as Tom Wilde."

And in the course of justice McKain, alias Tom Wilde, was sent up the river for three years.

After he had been mugged and fingerprinted, handcuffed between two other prisoners, a detective hustled the three of them aboard a train bound for the State's prison. Three hours later, when the great iron gates clanged shut between him and the outside world, a sudden nausea gripped McKain and he stumbled.

"What's eatin' you?" the detective growled.

The other two prisoners cursed him.

Bathed, his head shaved, clad in prison stripes, McKain became No. 3972 and was set to work on a cutting machine in the prison shirt factory. In the great cell-house, a square of steel cages towering story upon story into the gloom, he was assigned to a steel compartment on the fifth tier.

From the very moment that he had thrust his empty automatic into the ribs of the lonely pedestrian, No. 3972 had been all eyes and ears. Nothing escaped him. Soon he was broken into the lock-step. He acquired the knack of talking out of the corners of his mouth to the men at work on either side of him, so that the guards could not detect him, and he delighted in his successful infraction of the rules. Lying wide-eyed on his hard bunk, he learned to interpret the multitudinous sounds that infested the cell-house: the covert whispering, the heavy breathing of weary men, the tap-tap-tapping of signals along the steel gratings, the stealthy approach of the guards, the rattle of a key in a lock, the opening of a cell-door, the snarls and curses, the thudding of clubs on bone and flesh, the groans and whimpering followed by an ominous silence for a time only; then the sudden fiendish, sneering, mocking, maniacal laughter and the terrible grinding of jaw on jaw, lifting upward on and on through the piled-up tiers, until dawn came or the caged humans dropped off to sleep from exhaustion.

"Hell!" a shrill, piercing voice once screamed above the babel, the cry of a soul in the depths of agony. "Hell will be pleasant alongside o' this place!"

As the days grew into weeks and lengthened into months the cold, gray pile of stone and steel placed its unmistakable stamp upon No. 3972. The very air that he breathed was poisoned. Little by little hatred grew in his heart, hatred of a system that was founded on terror, that sought to accomplish its end by means of the "black hole," "trussing-up," "spread-eagling," sand-bagging, boot-licking trusties, brutal guards and petty thieving graft; hatred of a society that closed its eyes to the horrors of injustice, filth and disease that he saw everywhere around. Gradually he lost his healthy color and his skin became like old parchment, like something that has been long buried. His eyes grew hard and shifty, his lips sneering, his face sullen, his whole bearing hang-dog. He deteriorated into a sneak, and a cunning infraction of the rules was an achievement to gloat over. He became a furtive, hunted animal,

always fearful of the approach of some one or of some thing.

"They ain't on th' level," No. 3972 heard over and over again, until he believed it, too. "Th' bulls is crooked. Th' outside's crooked. We'll square things when we git out. What if they do nab us an' bring us back, eh? That's all in this dirty game. Why, bo, we ain't got th' chance of a snowball in inferno! See?"

When his time was up, clad in an ill-fitting suit of ready-mades, wearing the squeaky shoes which the State generously furnishes its departing enforced guests, clutching the railroad ticket and the five-dollar bill which had been graciously tendered him to assist in his rehabilitating himself among his fellowmen, McKain trudged down the long, twisting roadway that led to the station, where he took the train back to the city. His furtive movements, his shifty glances, his mechanical shuffle, and his prison pallor told their story all too well.

"D'you know Carrot Dolan?" a whisper came to him as he passed through the crowded station at his journey's end.

"What?" McKain asked, staring around, startled.

"Carrot Dolan," a young fellow at his elbow repeated softly. "D'you know him? He's up th' river where you come from."

"How'd you know I been up th' river?"

"It's written all over you, bo, all over you, like an electric sign."

"Git outa my way!" McKain snapped and lost himself in the crush.

He went directly to his apartment house.

"Gimme McKain's keys," he croaked at the hall desk.

"Give ye what?"

"McKain's keys."

"Who be ye?" the grizzled hallman demanded, eyeing McKain with very evident suspicion.

"Me? I'm McKain."

"Beat it, ye spalpeen!" The enraged Irishman rose belligerently behind his desk. "Ye be nothin' but a bum! Beat it afore I kick ye out! Th' brass o' th' divil! Mr. McKain was a gintleman, I'd have ye know!"

"What's eatin' th' old duffer an' what's th' matter with me?" McKain mumbled as he shuffled out to a telephone booth to call up the Bawn residence.

"Is Miss Bawn there?" he queried, choking with a sudden flow of feeling.

"This is Miss Bawn speaking."

"Miss Alice Bawn?"

"You mean Mrs. Blount," came the reply. "I am her sister. Alice married Mr. Blount about a year ago. They're living at the Westminster."

"Thanks!" McKain gasped as he hung up.

For a long time he squatted in the telephone booth, staring fixedly in front of him.

"I wonder if that was Blount's game to git me outa th' way," he kept repeating over and over again. "I wonder if he played me for a sucker."

He took a cross-town car to Dowling's office.

"Tell Mr. Dowling McKain wants to see him."

"Mr. Dowling can't see any one," the office boy grinned. "He died six months ago."

"Any member o' th' firm then," McKain gulped.

"What name will I give?"

"McKain."

The boy sauntered away, but returned quickly and motioned him into a mahogany-paneled office, where a young man, seated behind a huge desk, stared at him with a puzzled pucker between his eyes.

"I'm the junior partner of Green & Tracey, which used to be Dowling & Green," the young lawyer explained. "You are Mr. McKain?"

"I am."

"I don't know you from Adam," Tracey spoke crisply. "Mr. Green is now abroad and will not return for six months or so. Therefore, Mr. McKain, you will have to give me the word you and Mr. Dowling agreed upon before you went away. Give me that word and I'll feel satisfied."

"Word?" McKain queried, recalling like a flash the dead lawyer's insistence upon this point as a protection against fraud, but

try as he might he could not bring it back to his mind.

"Well?"

"It's gone. I forgot it," McKain sighed. "Up th' river——"

"Good-day!" Tracey snapped. "Come back when you remember the word or after Mr. Green's return."

"What d'you know?" McKain muttered as he stumbled blindly from the office and out into the street where the lamps were beginning to bloom in the dusk.

In somewhat of a daze he bought an evening paper and entered the quiet restaurant that he had formerly much frequented. It had not changed. He recognized the proprietor, and many of the waiters were the same, but no one seemed to know McKain.

The insolent attitude of his waiter got on his nerves. It was with a feeling of relief that he paid his check with what was left of the five-dollar bill, stuffed the newspaper into his coat pocket, and made his way out into the night. He was cursing under his breath, snarling like a dog driven into a corner.

"Now, there's a bloke," he grumbled as his eyes fell upon a tall, heavy-set, well-dressed man walking leisurely up the street half a block away, "who looks like a million, an' has th' whole works, I guess. Here I'm broke, flat-busted, down to my last jit. Can't git into my own rooms. Can't git my own coin just because a damned word's slipped me. I've been done dirt in th' love game, an' now it seems I ain't gonna have no chance to come back. Ain't that awful? Well, we'll see! Huh!"

Aimlessly he followed in the wake of the big man, instinctively keeping to the shadows. McKain trailed him into a tree-shaded side street, now stalking his man as an animal stalks his prey. McKain tripped over something and swore under his breath. He turned, stared down at the object, stooped and hurriedly picked up a short, heavy club, which he wrapped in his newspaper and tucked under his coat. Then he resumed his pursuit at a quickened pace. A wind had risen and was sighing dolefully through the thick foliage of the trees. Evidently altogether oblivious to McKain, his quarry paused in an alleyway out of the wind, struck a match and held it to his cigar. McKain tiptoed closer, rose to his full height, and the paper-wrapped club crashed down upon the other's skull. The match flare blinked out, and the big man doubled up with a queer grunt to crumple face downward on the cobbles.

"Some fat leather!" McKain gloated as he went through his victim's pockets. "Some juicy leather, I'd say!"

He gutted the wallet and tossed it from him. Then he rolled the still form over to get at the watch and chain.

"By th' Lord Harry!" McKain choked back a startled cry. "Strike me dead if it ain't Blount hisself! Some nifty headlight!" he breathed as he lifted a diamond scarf-pin, "an' a dandy tick-tock an' one swell chain." He rose and spurned the body with his foot. "You can't be findin' any fault with this, Blount," McKain chuckled evilly. "This is th' real twenty-two-karat goods I'm a-handin' you. Atmosphere? Huh!" He leaned low over Blount, put his hand over the poor man's heart and straightened with a jerk. "Gosh Almighty!" McKain exclaimed. "I kinda guess we're square now. Blount's dead! I've croaked him!"

Then without as much as a glance behind him, his fists tightly clutching the loot which he had jammed into his coat pockets, McKain went slinking away to be swallowed up forever in the shadows.

The City's Dead

DURING the year there are in the city of New York about six thousand unknown and pauper dead committed to the city for burial. This gives a daily average of seventeen, but through the hot months the number is far greater. It is not uncommon after a hot July day to see fifty bodies lying in the dead-house at Bellevue which have been picked up by the ambulances about the city. They are in most cases unknown persons. The number of sudden deaths about the streets compelled the Board of Charities and Correction to employ a system to meet these sudden calls from all directions, both night and day. During the afternoon of a hot day there will frequently be twenty-five ambulance calls within two hours—all requiring immediate attention.

In a case of sunstroke out of reach of a telephone, the delay formerly occasioned in such cases has been remedied by a "fire-call" system. By this method a policeman may step to the nearest fire-alarm box and telegraph an ambulance call which registers in three hospitals. If the wagons at each of the hospitals are disengaged, and they all answer the call, the patient is taken by the first ambulance that arrives and the others return to their posts.

There were twelve city ambulances, each driven by a careful driver and in charge of a physician, who takes his seat at the rear of the wagon. Each ambulance is covered and painted black, with the name of the hospital from which it comes and the word "ambulance" painted conspicuously outside. In front of the driver is a large gong which is sounded to clear the way before it, and its tones are of equal authority with the gongs of the Fire Department. Each ambulance is equipped with a full set of surgical instruments and a medicine chest, bundles of lint, plasters, splints and bandages, all neatly stowed away under the driver's seat. The floor is covered with a soft mattress, on which the patient is laid, and on which he can be moved on arrival at the hospital without changing to a litter.

At the hospital the ambulance stands in readiness night and day. When a call is sent in the driver mounts his box, drives to the front of the building, where the surgeon in charge is in readiness, having full information of the direction of the call. The surgeon takes his seat and the horse is urged forward with the utmost speed. On arrival at the destination the driver dismounts and assists the surgeon in placing the patient in the ambulance, and then without delay returns to the hospital. Meanwhile the surgeon makes a hasty diagnosis and applies the proper restoratives. The patient is taken from the ambulance at the hospital and assigned to a ward. A second examination is now held and the case carefully treated. If the patient dies he is, after the proper tests to establish that fact beyond doubt, laid out upon a covered stretcher and removed to the dead-house if his name is known. Otherwise the body is laid in the Morgue.

In addition to the ambulances the city owns two dead-wagons which, like the ambulances, are in readiness at all times to answer calls. The dead-wagon resembles in appearance the ambulance, but is in charge of a driver who, instead of the medical supplies, carries four sizes of coffins, to accommodate an infant, a child, a woman or a large-sized man, as the case may be.

The driver ascertains the street and number of the house he is to visit and hastens to the spot. He next makes sure of the number and size of the bodies to be cared for and takes from the wagon a suitable

coffin. After placing the body in the coffin he transfers it to the dead-house. The localities visited by the dead-wagons are mainly the most desperate in the city. But the body may be in the attic of a tenement-house, in the street, beside a railroad track or floating in the river. The bodies are frequently in an advanced stage of decomposition, rendering it an unpleasant task to remove them. And often when the body is in the river or badly mutilated it is a difficult as well as unpleasant matter to secure the remains. The drivers have to run the risk of handling the remains of persons who have died of contagious diseases, and often meet revolting scenes where the ignorant relatives of the deceased have neglected the proper observances upon the death of the person.

The coffins used by the city are roughly made of unplaned spruce boards nailed together like boxes. They are all made by the prisoners at Blackwell's Island and brought to the Morgue on the convicts' steamer.

The Morgue and the dead-house are usually confounded in the public mind. But they are distinct, and each have their separate functions. Whenever a badly decomposed body is received it goes to the dead-house, and all bodies that have been the required time in the Morgue, together with those sent by friends for public burial, find their way to the dead-house. The building is at the foot of East Twenty-sixth street, within the Bellevue Hospital grounds. It is about 60 feet long by 15 wide and 12 feet high. It is loosely constructed of boards and well ventilated. The building is on a pier, around and under which the waves of the East River splash. It is both a store-house for the rude coffins and a receptacle for the dead. It is from the dead-house that the remains are removed to the department steamer on their way to Potter's Field, on Hart's Island.

The Morgue is a much more elaborate affair, and consists of several rooms. The Morgue proper is a large room with a stone floor. It has no furniture of any description, save granite slabs, eight feet long each, raised on four iron posts to a height of four feet. These slabs are slightly inclined towards the foot, and have a groove running along the outer edges. About two feet above the head of each slab a spray of water from a hanging jet sprinkles the entire slab. On these slabs the remains of the unknown dead are placed, and the spray of water is allowed to sprinkle the body, running off in the gutters at the sides. The Morgue is kept cool, and the bodies are held for identification as long as the weather will permit. Next to the Morgue proper is a room of equal size with several smaller slabs. This room is used for coroners' inquests, for post-mortem examinations, dissecting and embalming. Very many of the cases which come to Bellevue Hospital are in such an advanced stage that the patient dies before a full understanding of the disease has been gained. Under these circumstances the coroner orders an inquest to ascertain the cause of the death, and the hospital physicians further examine to acquaint themselves with the disease. The room is frequently used by medical students for dissecting, the subjects being furnished them from the dead-house, according to the law of the State.

The second story of the Morgue is occupied by an anatomical museum, where may be seen many human curiosities and monstrosities. Every peculiar case that has come to Bellevue for treatment has been preserved for the museum. Either in the original or casts of the original are shown the steps of development of all the complicated diseases, which have undergone treatment there.

Before the bodies are removed to the dead-house they are photographed and the negative preserved for friends, should any ever appear. There is a gallery of these pictures numbering thousands. It is a ghastly collection. The dull, expressionless eyes and distorted features, the disheveled hair and bruised skin unite in producing a horrible effect.

This system of photographing the unknown dead was the invention of a superintendent of Bellevue Hospital and has proved invaluable to friends who, after the lapse of months, have been enabled to rec-

ognize the likenesses. In addition to this the clothing is accurately noted and the peculiarities of dress or persons are carefully recorded in a book kept for the purpose. The clothing is removed from each body and preserved for three months, together with whatever was found upon the person of the deceased. These bundles of clothes, with perhaps a ring or watch, have often served to identify the owner long after the remains have been buried. The officer in charge of the Morgue is required to keep an accurate account of the age, weight, color, sex, nationality and general description of everybody that comes to the Morgue. The data is kept in the Morgue book. Here can be seen a record of every unknown person who has died in New York for more than twenty-five years. The utmost care is exercised in all details, and the authorities in charge have had long experience in their peculiar duties. Friends looking for missing persons are courteously received and assisted in every way to identify the lost. Many affecting scenes have taken place in the Morgue when mourning relatives have discovered lying cold in death on those stone slabs all that is mortal of a brother, a mother or a wife. The body may at any time be removed from the Morgue and given into the custody of friends upon application to the Board of Health.

After the body has remained a suitable time in the Morgue it is placed in a coffin and taken to the dead-house. Three times a week the department steamer calls for the dead, and they are removed to Hart's Island. On arrival at the pier at Hart's Island the coffins are placed in the city hearse and removed to Potter's Field. At this place the coffins are numbered and the figures gouged into the cover.

A huge trench 45 feet by 20 is dug to the depth of 8 feet and the coffins are laid along the side from 1 to 25. Then along the opposite side from 28 to 50. A covering of one foot of earth is now cast over the whole and another tier of twenty-five on each side of the trench is buried. A second sprinkling of earth follows and then the third tier is placed above the other two, making in all 150 bodies in each trench. The trench is filled in, graded and sowed with grass. Headstones are erected at the four corners and the letter of the trench carved on them.

The cemetery was started many years ago, and has since been the burial place for the city's dead. The walks are carefully trimmed and the driveways graveled and graded. Flowers and trees have been set out, and ornamental shrubs are growing about the place. A memorial monument has been erected by the G. A. R. Handsome headstones have been placed above the graves of those of the nation's dead at the expense of the War Department. There are also several separate graves, each with its stone bearing an inscription. One marks the resting-place of an aged woman named Campbell, who lived to the age of one hundred and twelve years. Another the graves of five little children who went down on a war vessel in the harbor. There are thousands of dwellers in this City of the Dead.

The interment of the dead has been reduced to such a system that the resting place of every body is exactly known. A record is kept of the trench, the tier, and the position of the coffin in the tier. As an illustration of the practical value of the system, a body to be exhumed after twelve years' burial was found, and the coffin identified without the slightest difficulty. The exact position was indicated upon the books of the Morgue.

During the summer the numbers of the pauper dead are so great that their disposition gives ready employment to twenty-five men who are engaged in digging the trenches, burying the dead and caring for the grounds.

Visitors are not numerous at Hart's Island, although the superintendent is always glad to see strangers and is exceedingly courteous to all. He will detail an assistant at any time to escort a party about the cemetery and explain the modus operandi at the island. The department steamer makes two trips daily to Potter's Field. A permit and pass may be easily obtained of the Department of Charities and Corrections, and an instructive excursion can be made to this city of the dead.

Wanted: A Body

By RALEIGH E. ROSS

THE girl in the Classified Advertising Department of the Saint Paul *Dispatch* accepted the typewritten slip from the small boy at the window. Mechanically she began to read.

Her eyes widened. Pale of face, she gasped for the boy to wait and sought the manager's desk.

He glanced up in surprise at the girl and then read the copy:

"WANTED: A corpse. Must be of male, over twenty-one and under fifty. Not more than six hours dead. Must have it by Thursday at midnight. Willing to pay $500. Legitimate use for same. 1618 Como Park avenue.

"(Note: Please print in eight-point bold face with two-point rule border and plenty of white space, if consistent with your make-up policy.)"

The manager whistled to avoid a shudder. Then he went to the window.

"Where did you get this, son?" he asked kindly.

The freckle-faced boy seemed surprised at the question. Evidently he had not read, or did not understand the advertisement.

"The old man by the lake gave it to me," he said. "And he gave me this to pay for it and told me to keep the change."

He proffered a five-dollar bill.

"By what lake?"

"Why, Lake Como." The boy became confidential. "You see, none of us know this old man's name, so we call him 'the old man by the lake.' "

"I see," said the manager thoughtfully. Then he turned to the girl. "We'll accept it," he said. "Enter it in the regular way. It should make a good news story."

That afternoon Cub Reporter Kane was handed a proof of this advertisement.

"It will appear in to-day's edition," said the city editor. "Go out and see what ails that old fossil."

George Kane read the advertisement several times as he sat in the Como Park car. It was rather cold in the car, but Kane's shiver was not entirely due to the temperature. Here was one time when he experienced a trace of fear—a sort of premonition of disaster.

Yet he felt big and strong enough to take care of himself. He had played fullback on the Central High team, followed by strenuous service in France which had kept him fit until 1919. And he had been taking care of himself since.

"It's probably a joke," he muttered, "though it doesn't read like one. If this bird is in earnest he has great faith in the pulling power of our classified columns. To-day is Thursday, and he expects the advertisement to produce results by midnight."

Arriving at the end of the line, Kane tramped through the snow to Como Park avenue. The house he sought proved to be the last one on the street—a solitary, ramshackle frame structure. It looked as if it had been erected about the time James J. Hill built his first railroad.

George ascended the rickety steps and rang the bell. It echoed as if it were deserted. There were no footsteps; nothing but the chill wind off the frozen lake.

Then the door opened suddenly without a creak. A Japanese servant with a long scar in his cheek bowed in the doorway.

George presented his card. He was shown into a large parlor, which, with its high ceilings and massive woodwork, spoke of a generation long past.

Cases along the walls were filled with strange curios. In one case were weapons of many shapes, from the crude stone knife of the primitive savage to the polished simitar of the Turk.

A second case contained strange Eastern charms and a miniature replica of the pyramids. On a shelf by themselves were two camels, apparently of gold, and an ugly Japanese idol with a tiny dagger between its teeth. In one corner of the room stood an Egyptian mummy.

Before George had a chance to observe more the servant entered and conducted him to a room at the rear of the house.

At a polished mahogany table sat a man who filled the reporter with vague uneasiness. His pointed Van Dyke beard, which should have been white, was a dirty gray. One of his arms was shriveled. And he sat as if his spine had long been injured.

At the left of the desk were several heavy glass jars.

As Kane advanced to the desk the servant retired, closing the door.

"I suppose you're after a story in connection with my somewhat unusual advertisement?" said the little man in a deep bass voice, curiously out of harmony with his stature.

Kane nodded.

"Do you think your paper can produce results?"

Again Kane nodded. This queer little man left him strangely at a loss for something to say.

A queer light flashed in the shining blue eyes—the light of madness.

"Then sit down," he directed, indicating a chair at the side of the desk.

As Kane did so his host pressed a harmless-looking button in the corner of his desk. The chair seemed to collapse in a dozen pieces under George's weight as a floor panel beneath slid noiselessly aside. The reporter went flying downward to the stone floor of the cellar.

Dazed, he looked up to see the little man leering at him from the aperture above.

"A corpse is a corpse," he chuckled. "If I get one by midnight you needn't serve. But if your paper fails to produce——"

He spread out his hands in a gesture of helplessness.

"The police will get you," growled Kane with a courage he did not feel.

"Bah, your police. Numbskulls. After you disappear they could search this place a thousand times and discover no trace. But if you must serve, it will be easy. A bit of gas in your prison until you sleep. Oh, of course not enough to hurt you for my purposes."

Another chuckle and the panel closed.

George had risen and now gingerly felt all over himself. He had landed on his stomach and struck the floor with his face. His nose was bleeding, and one knee pained, but outside of that he was not much hurt. He rejoiced in finding that his match-box was almost full, as the room was totally dark.

"He's crazy, all right," he muttered. "Sane men don't act this way."

The light from the first match disclosed a square bare room every dimension of which seemed about ten feet. George paced it off later, finding this estimate fairly accurate for width and breadth. The height was about the same as nearly as he could reckon it.

Further matches revealed that the room was in truth empty. Not a single object did it contain. And the only entrance and outlet of sufficient size for a man was the one through which George had fallen.

He made one further discovery—a round hole in the wall about two inches in diameter.

He thrust his fingers in as far as he could, feeling the smooth sides of what was apparently a long pipe.

"I suppose this provides the gas," he said grimly. "Well, no need to worry for a while, I guess."

Then the reporter started in one corner and began methodically to press every inch of the wall within his reach. If there was a secret button, as he suspected, he intended to find it. And any occupation was better than sitting in the dark and thinking of the future. He estimated that he had a good six hours before midnight.

It was ten o'clock when the bell of the

house by the lake rang. The silent servant ushered a shivering visitor into the parlor.

The man was thinly clad. His face was dirty and his clothes patched and threadbare. He exuded a strong aroma of something that Volstead sought to banish.

As the Jap left him the man's dull eyes became suddenly brilliant. Quiet as a cat, he arose from his chair and inspected the room. Then he pulled back the front curtain, and the clear ray of his flashlight described a momentary circle in the night. When the Jap returned a minute later the visitor was dozing in his chair.

The little man in the rear room eyed the stranger keenly, then asked:

"You have a corpse to offer?"

"No, but I can get one."

The visitor, with an ugly smile, produced a dirk from a case under his arm and ran the keen blade along the edge of his thumb. "Is that $500 straight goods?" he asked.

"It is," smiled the little man, "but I don't want you to murder me to get it. Won't you sit down?"

The stranger slouched into the chair as his host pressed the button. George had barely time to avoid the flying form as it hurtled through the trapdoor to the room Kane occupied.

The second man fell limply, his head striking the rough wall in the course of his somersault downward. He was unconscious when he landed. The knife clattered on the cement floor a short distance away.

Again George heard the evil chuckle.

"You are saved," said his captor. "There's your corpse."

George shrank back. The light from above fell full upon the huddled form at his feet. The reporter noted the rather vicious appearance of the face and the threadbare clothes.

"It is him or you," said the little man. "Now is your time, while he is unconscious. Finish him and you shall go free. You have ten minutes."

The panel above closed.

George felt the unconscious form on the floor. The man's head was bleeding from its contact with the rough stone wall. He had fallen farther backward than Kane, who had just missed the wall.

The reporter had no doubt that the little man would open the panel above in ten minutes. What could he do?

Crawling across the floor, he found the dirk. Then he carefully laid bare the man's chest.

The moment had arrived. The reporter had everything to live for. He was engaged to be married. He was young and just tasting a fair measure of success. And this man was evidently a derelict. What could such a life matter?

Kane lifted the dagger, but not to kill. He ran it quickly through the man's hair—bloody from the deep cut on his forehead.

Quickly he placed the knife in plain view at the side of the man. Then he struck himself in the face with the flat of his hand. Since his nose had bled so recently, he found that to start it again was easy.

The stranger stirred and moaned. Then he started to sit upright.

"Lie down," ordered George. "You're supposed to be dead."

"What's the game?" asked the stranger softly.

George explained the situation and his plan.

"If I once get out of here," he said, "I'll make short work of our insane friend."

"Right," agreed the other. "My name is Kelly and glad to meet you. I'm a detective. I read that ad., and came to investigate the guy who put it in the paper. If you can reach the front door, just whistle, and my men will come on the run."

"That makes it easier," said the reporter. "Now play dead while I rub some of this dust on your face."

When the panel above opened a very realistic-looking corpse lay beneath it. George stood trembling in one corner.

The little man looked gloatingly down on the scene.

Then he gave vent to one of his mirthless chuckles.

"Ah, well done," he exclaimed. "But I have changed my mind. See you later—in the next world," and the panel closed just

as the reporter made a frantic leap for the opening.

A laugh came from the detective.

"So you get no pay for your murder," he exclaimed.

The tone brought George back to his senses again.

"What are we to do?" he asked helplessly.

"Plug up that pipe," said the detective, and his flashlight cut the darkness. "Blast the luck. Why did I tell these cops to wait for my second signal?"

He tore off his shirt, and they rammed part of it down the pipe. Already they smelled the telltale odor of gas.

"Your matches are no good any longer," commented the detective, "unless we care to risk an explosion. Now we must stage a second death scene. How does an asphyxiated man look?"

"Kind of blue, I guess," said the reporter grimly.

"Very well," agreed the detective, "and you ought to have a blue pencil."

George fished in his pockets. "I have one," he said and added with an attempt at a smile, "but only editors are supposed to use them, you know."

"What I don't know about the newspaper game don't worry me," grunted the detective. "Lie over there, will you?"

George complied, and the detective crushed the blue lead and rubbed the reporter's face with it. Then he did the same with his own temples and forehead.

"This may seem foolish," he remarked, "but the old man's eyes may not be as good as they used to be. And we can't overlook any bets in our situation. Now we'll lie down, breathe lightly and take it easy."

As they lay stretched out on the floor the scent of gas grew stronger with each passing minute, despite the plug in the pipe. George fell to wondering sleepily if this was, after all, the end.

The minutes passed until the wait seemed intolerable. The reporter felt sure that the detective had never been in as tight a fix as this. He wondered if Kelly's confidence still held.

As he lay there the reason for the advertisement suddenly flashed through his mind. He remembered the mummy. And he recalled the fact that the glass jars near the desk were of the kind in which formaldehyde or embalming fluid is sometimes kept. The old man was probably experimenting, trying to embalm as perfectly as the Egyptians did.

Kane felt sure that was the reason he had wanted a corpse within a few hours of death. It also accounted for his disinclination to have a body bloated with gas.

George may have stumbled on the correct explanation, but he never expected to have a chance to check it up. What a feature story this would make for his paper.

There's a shadowy borderland on the edge of consciousness with limits difficult to define. You've passed it when you have taken an anesthetic without really knowing just when you became unconscious.

Kane's spirit was hovering in this borderland when the panel above slid suddenly open. An eager face looked down upon his handiwork.

The maniac saw apparently two corpses, eyes closed, faces discolored, bodies motionless.

Then he slid slowly forward. The detective and the reporter never knew whether it was the effect of the sudden draft of gas or whether the cripple simply lost his balance. At any rate the misshapen figure crashed headlong into the cellar, landing between his two intended victims.

The detective rose unsteadily and assisted the reporter to his feet. Neither dared to speak. The detective cupped his hands at his waist. George understood. With the supreme effort of an exhausted athlete he placed his right foot in the cupped hands and leaped upward, grasping the edge of the open panel. Slowly and wearily he drew himself up.

The room above was empty. Rushing to the window, he threw it open and attempted to shout. But no sound would come. The winter wind felt like water to a man dying of thirst.

A noise upstairs reminded George of the servant. What if the Jap should prevent the rescue when it had progressed thus

far? Deliberately the reporter picked up a chair and smashed the upper pane of the window.

The clatter of glass was heard by the policeman outside and was properly interpreted. They advanced with a rush.

There was no opposition. Somehow the wily servant had disappeared. Kelly was quickly rescued and the little man also pulled up.

The detective walked unsteadily to the window and took about five minutes of eager breathing exercises. Then he came back for an examination of the gnarled little figure on the floor.

"Dead," he said finally; "broken neck. I'll say he deserved it. Well, kid, how'd you like to be a detective?"

George managed a smile. "Nothin' doin'," he said. "Guess I'll stick to my job. One case like this was almost too much."

WOMAN GETS BANDIT

MRS. TERESA MUSDORFF is a heroine, but she is not quite sure that she deserves the honor. She helped arrest a hold-up man and did a good job, but she fainted before she started to help.

Mrs. Musdorff is a friend of Mrs. Lena Elsen, who owns a tea room up at 236 East Eightieth street, New York. She went there the other night to visit her friend, but found that the tea room mistress was out for a few moments, having left the shop in charge of Miss Grace Wolcott, a waitress.

There were not many customers. A man sat over in one corner. In another was a sleepy youth. He had ordered cider, Miss Wolcott said, and had appeared to be slightly intoxicated. While the two women watched him he got up and staggered to the door.

A few seconds later, however, he was back. He broke up the quiet of the place by flourishing a revolver and shouting a general if somewhat excited order for everybody to "hands up." The man who had been sitting in the corner obeyed. Miss Wolcott fainted. But Mrs. Musdorff headed for the door.

She got there in safety and slipped out. But the bandit saw her and chased her. On the sidewalk he caught her and, sticking the revolver under her nose, told her to go back. And that is where she fainted.

The youth ran immediately. But Mrs. Musdorff revived, and she shouted to a policeman. Patrolman Hommell of the East Sixty-seventh street station caught the running youth and brought him to the woman.

"Search him," she demanded. "He has a gun."

The youth, who said he was John Seely, was held on charges of attempted robbery and violation of the Sullivan law.

The Art of Faking Art

By CARL H. GETZ

BERNARD SHAW once said that a millionaire can buy fifty motor cars, but he can only drive one at a time. He can buy food for a whole city, but he has only one stomach to digest it. He can buy all the seats in a theatre, but he can occupy but one. But to own a work of Michelangelo or Raphael is a different tale; it "affords one the sensation of owning and driving a hundred or more motor cars all at the same time in a sort of ultra-modern triumphal march of glory to the up-to-date Olympus of the privileged, where fame is highly seasoned with self-advertisement and superlatives and daily ingredient of reputation."

There are those who collect works of art because they love art. There are those who collect as an avocation. And there are those who collect to "astonish the natives." This last group is the prey of international societies of men and women who are basically dishonest in their conduct. They live by fraud. But they also live by virtue of their knowledge of art, their culture and personal charm. In the entire criminal world there is no one to compare with the connoisseur of fake art.

These fakers prosper because those who have money and wish to display a love for all things artistic will not mingle with dealers and will not attend public sales. Instead they must "engage" an expert. And an expert is what they usually get, but they also get a man whose business in life is to get something for nothing. He judges his employer and then proceeds to "unload."

A well-known American collector on a visit to Italy, Riccardo Nobili, the connoisseur of Florence, tells us, was once offered in Florence a crystal cup supposed to have been cut by Valerio Vicentino. With the full approval of the experts the cup was bought for $4,000. The handsome find turned out to be the work of a faker practising in the north of Italy, and the whole scheme planned by a non-Florentine dealer.

An English curio dealer of unquestionably high repute realized large profits on Dresden china by the artful way he put before the public an article apparently out of fashion with collectors of ceramics. For two or three years he bought all the Meissen ware within reach until he had accumulated a large quantity at extremely low prices. Then he began sending pieces to noted auction sales, where he invariably sent agents to buy them in after running the objects up to an extravagant price. This trick gradually built up a reputation for Meissen china. Then some noted collector began to take an interest in it, and others followed in his wake. When Meissen ware became the rage and prices were accordingly high, the shrewd dealer got rid of his stock at an astonishing profit.

Now there is nothing absolutely dishonest about this. But it is typical of one class of art dealers.

An American collector was visiting different Italian cities in search of genuine bas-reliefs. In certain shops he found what he wanted, but was in doubt about the price. He decided to shop around a bit, and then concluded to visit the shops a second time. This time when he went into the stores he was followed by a very well-dressed man, who seemed to be looking for bas-reliefs also. This aroused the curiosity of the American, especially when the visitor bought a particular piece he wanted and paid twice as much for it as the American intended. Then the Italian confided to the American that what he had purchased was

an original Mino and of great value. The Italian explained further that he understood there were other Minos in the city. Then he proceeded to explain how to identify a Mino bas-relief.

The American hurried from one shop to another and finally bought four "Minos" at what he felt was an exorbitant sum.

"But then," he said to himself, "it means something to own a Mino."

"Yes, indeed. But he didn't have one. What he had were imitations. And the well-dressed man was in partnership with the owners of the different shops. The American police would have described him as a "come-on" man.

Paul Eudel tells of another interesting story of the operations of those whose business is fake art.

A piece of pottery was taken to a member of the Academie des Inscriptions, as it bore a rather cryptic sequence of letters that had proved puzzling to other authorities. The pot with the letters in question, M. J. D. D., had been excavated near Dijon. As soon as the academician saw the letters he had no hesitation in pronouncing it to be a Roman vase, a small amphora used as an ex-voto. The letters, he said, represented the initials of the Latin invocation:

Magno Jove Deorum Deo.

Being a question of a votive offering, nothing would be more consistent than the words, "To the great Jupiter, the god of gods." Unfortunately such a splendid piece of inductive reasoning was shattered when an ordinary art dealer examined the jar and declared it to be an ordinary mustard pot, in fact, the initials meaning:

Moutarde Jaune de Dijon.

For a considerable time an inscription found on a worm-eaten piece of a signboard puzzled the world of erudites. The inscription, evidently the work of a jester, ran thus:

I. C. I	E.	S.
T. L.	E. C. H.	E.
M.	I. N.	D. E.
S. A.	N. E.	S.

Needless to say many explanations of the obliterated letters were offered by professors, and many interesting reconstructions of the ancient inscription were given. The riddle, however, was not solved until some one entirely unacquainted with the art of reading old inscriptions happened to read the letters straight off without regard to spacing, furnishing the following true explanation:

"Ici Est Le Chemin Des Anes."

"This is the way for asses!" has since become a by-word in lampooning blind erudition.

Rochefort tells this incident of a Paris public auction of paintings.

A collector confided to the care of an expert a painting of a religious subject representing a scene from the Apocalypse. Giving this information, the owner asked the expert to put the painting up for auction at the first important sale.

According to the arrangement the work was included among the other canvasses at a public sale and printed in the catalogue as a description of the subject:

"Tableau de saintete d'apres l'Apocalypse." (Sacred picture after Apocalypse.)

"D'apres l'Apocalypse?" questioned some one when the work was offered for sale. To which the unabashed expert promptly replied:

"Yes, sir, Apocalypse, a German painter not very well known in Paris, but highly esteemed abroad."

A book rather than a brief article such as this could be written about paintings, sculpture, pottery and the other things which are faked and sold as originals. And hand in hand with the faker goes the smuggler.

Genuine works of art have been smuggled from one country to another as imitations. It has been a common trick for smugglers to have some rural scene painted over a masterpiece. In this way the picture can be transported without difficulty from one country to another. When an ultimate, satisfactory purchaser is found the new paint is washed off and the original painting revealed.

Statuary has been broken into parts and shipped in parts to different countries. Later the statue is reassembled, and curiously

enough because it has been damaged it is of greater value than if it had always been intact.

Another common practice of smugglers is to paste a piece of thick paper over a painting and then have painted some sea scene on the surface. Later the paper is removed and the old masterpiece produced.

One Italian bric-a-brac dealer succeeded in smuggling a lot of very valuable pieces to America by inscribing the name of a modern art dealer on each piece. These names were covered with putty and when the inspectors refused to pass the pieces the owner scraped the putty away and revealed the name of a dealer throughout Italy. The inspectors immediately assumed that the dealer was attempting to pass modern pieces as original, and so allowed the pieces to be passed. But the truth was that genuine bric-a-bracs were passed.

In the Museum of Art in Berlin to-day there is a statue which was shipped out of Italy in two parts in two women's trunks. To cut down the weight of the two parts of the statues the interiors were hollowed out. The inspectors were told that the trunks contained personal effects, and finding the ladies very charming, they allowed the trunks to pass unopened.

An Italian smuggler used this trick to get an old master out of his country. When his picture was examined the inspectors refused to let it pass. Then, as if by accident, a well-dressed man appeared and listened with interest to the conversation between the inspectors and the owner of the painting.

"What is that man trying to do with the reproduction?" asked the man.

The owner of the picture protested and said that the picture was not a reproduction, but that it was genuine.

The man laughed, and the inspectors asked him what he knew about the picture. In reply the man pulled out a small folding magnifying-glass from his pocket and carefully examined the corners of the picture.

"Reproduction, I tell you, reproduction," he said.

The inspectors turned to the owner of the picture, whose head was hanging low.

"It is true," he said, and he began to cry. "I wanted to sell it as an original."

Whereupon the inspectors took pity upon him, promised him they would say nothing and allowed the picture to pass. They did not know that the two men were partners and that the picture was actually genuine.

The curio collector offers large opportunities for the dealer in fake art. It has been said that enough wood has been sold in Jerusalem as pieces from the cross to build a building the size of Woolworth's.

Tourists have purchased enough curios in Rome which are said to have come from the Vatican to fill a dozen Vaticans.

There are hundreds of ways to convince the tourist. A common method in Italy is for two dealers to argue with each other in the presence of tourists. The Americans usually listen, and note that the argument is over some bric-a-brac. Finally a bystander explains that the argument is over a piece of art which was owned by one of the famous emperors and that one wants to buy it, but that the other wants too much. The bystander explains what the man wants for the piece, and adds that it is worth ten times as much, but that the two men don't really know its value. Whereupon the American interrupts to inquire whether he may put in a bid. And his first bid always buys the piece. Then all three men, the two who had the argument and the third, move on to where they can find other prospective purchasers.

In France and Belgium, as well as in Germany to-day, war curios are still being sold in great quantities to American tourists. It is said, for example, that several thousand so-called helmets of the former kaiser have been sold. Personal possessions of Foch have been sold by the gross. Trinkets owned by Joffre have been sold by the hundreds. And of course all are fakes.

Art is a field for only the artist. The newly rich who try to learn art overnight are usually victims of clever fakers before they get very far in their purchase of paintings, sculpture, pottery and the like.

The dealer in fake art usually knows art. But he insists upon devoting his talents to fraud.

The artists themselves who produce the reproductions usually enjoy seeing the public fooled. They don't protest when their works of art are sold as genuine.

The art of faking is pretty largely an European crime, and crime it is. In this country art dealers have built up a reputation for integrity, and while now and then one hears of the sale of a faked piece of art, it is quite unusual. But for some reason the American who is cautious at home throws caution to the winds when he goes abroad, with the result that he returns home loaded down with what he thinks are priceless possessions, but which are commonly fakes.

It might be added in closing that the business of detecting the art faker is an art in itself. No layman can attempt it. The detective who seeks to ferret out the art faker must know art. Then and only then can he hope to succeed.

FRAUDULENT CHECKS

EVERY three and a half minutes a forged check is cashed in the United States, and the total losses to business through the operations of check forgers and raisers is estimated at $50,000,000 to $65,000,000 annually and increasing at the rate of more than $1,000,000 yearly.

This is the one form of crime that never loses its appeal to the accomplished criminal. Its followers constitute the flower and aristocracy of the underworld, men and women who live by their brains, whose hands are unsoiled save by ink, acid or pigment and whose cleverness and dexterity make them the most dangerous class of criminals, says the Philadelphia *Public Ledger.*

The astonishing totals of the losses through their depredations have more than an academic interest for all who use checks or other negotiable paper to any great extent, for the modern methods of the organized gangs that prey on checks are such that they use as the raw material of their frauds genuine checks rather than those of their own manufacture.

Of course, the forger selects for his work those checks that are carelessly drawn or that are without the usual safeguards that have been devised to make negotiable paper forgery-proof.

To guard against loss by improper drawing of the check, the payee's name should be written in a good quality of ink. When no check writer is used, the figures should be written with a minimum of space between each figure in the amount to guard against the amount being raised, and where the amount is written by hand the writing should begin as closely as possible to the left hand margin of the line and any unfilled space of the line should be filled in by heavy parallel lines.

The history of check forgeries is one of a long-drawn-out battle of wits between an expert class of criminals and the forces of law and order. It has been the experience that they are the most difficult of all offenders to run down and that even in cases when they are caught it is more difficult to obtain convictions than in any other crime cases. This fact and the fact that the use of checks is greater in this country than in any other country in the world and that the percentage of carelessly drawn and unprotected checks is very great, have supplied the penmen with their golden opportunity.

But in all the years the penmen have been operating, men even cleverer than they and aligned on the side of society, have been working quite as assiduously to devise ways to circumvent them. For years the battle of wits inclined to this side, now to that, but always the crook eventually devised a way to beat the forgery-proof device. As fast as this happened the machines developed to prevent check frauds had to be scrapped and the inventors patiently resumed their efforts to perfect a machine that would be 100 per cent. forgery proof.

A CASE FOR THE GOVERNMENT

by Paul N. Wilson

AS the noon train from Washington jerked to an impatient halt in the little village of Hardenville, thirty miles over the line into Maryland, a slender, middle-aged man carrying a small handbag swung lightly from the steps of the rear coach to the gravel platform.

Almost as the train stopped a large automobile drew up at the station. Two men, one of them in the uniform of a colonel of the United States Army, got out and hurried across the platform. The colonel, a large, gray-haired man with a stiff, upturned mustache, approached the man who had descended from the train.

"Are you Mr. Bates?" he demanded brusquely.

"Yes," answered the man, holding out his hand. "You're Colonel Pearson, I suppose?"

"I am, sir." Pearson turned to the man who had accompanied him in the automobile. "This is Mr. Liebe. Mr. Liebe was Mr. Burman's associate—until Burman was killed."

"Oh, yes," murmured Bates politely, turning to shake hands with a short, stoop-shouldered man of about fifty, whose deep, close-set eyes blinked nervously behind a pair of heavy spectacles. A black, scraggly beard completely covered the lower part of his face. His demeanor was that of a man more at home in his own laboratory than on a station platform.

"Pleased to meet you," he said stiffly, offering his hand. "Though I'd rather it was under more pleasant circumstances. I——"

"Yes," interrupted Pearson, turning back toward the automobile. "It's a bad business, Bates, a bad business. Under the circumstances I considered it a government case and telephoned Mr. Wharton to send me his best man. I presume," he smiled, "that since you're here you're his best man—eh?"

"I suppose so," agreed Bates non-committally. "Now," he asked as the three men settled into the rear seat, "suppose you tell me all about it. I know nothing except what Mr. Wharton told me. Who was this Mr. Burman?"

"Burman," explained the colonel, while Liebe bent forward to direct the chauffeur, "was a chemist—one of the best. He and Mr. Liebe here had perfected a formula for a new gas. It was different than anything we've ever had before. If it proves to be all that Liebe and Burman claim for it, it——"

"It will," interrupted Liebe, impulsively.

"You not being a technical man, Mr. Bates," continued Pearson, "probably won't

understand much of it, but the idea was this: Burman and Liebe had perfected a gas which appears to have a body and molecular attraction peculiar to itself; a gas which, when released in a given spot, is sufficiently heavy to remain indefinitely in that position; a gas which, if released, say, upward along a straight line a mile long will remain as an invisible wall of defense for some three or four days without dissolving into the atmosphere."

"What is it for?" asked Bates, interested, looking with new respect at Liebe.

"Well," explained Pearson, "it would be mighty valuable in a good many ways. For instance, as a defense on our coast line. If the process were sufficiently developed it would be possible to run a slender pipeline along our entire Atlantic and Pacific coast line. In case of attack all that would be necessary would be to turn on the gas, let it escape into the air and renew it every three or four days, merely maintaining a small stream of gas discharging from the pipe to establish an attraction and hold the gas clouds in place. Any enemy attacking our coasts would have to penetrate through this gas wall and, since it is strong enough to eat its way through any uniform or gas mask, it would be almost impenetrable. Of course it would necessitate vacating our cities directly on the coast, but that would be a small matter compared with resisting an invader."

"Very interesting," murmured Bates.

"Yes. Liebe and Burman had been negotiating with the War Department for the purchase of the plans and formula, and I came up here from Washington yesterday to go into the matter with them. I——"

"And found Mr. Burman dead, eh?"

"No. Burman was killed yesterday afternoon. We had agreed to pay them $250,000 for the whole thing providing it proved up to what they claimed for it."

"Not enough, either!" growled Liebe through his beard.

"Possibly not," admitted Pearson, "but I can't help that."

Bates, sensing that the subject was a touchy one between the two men, pressed back in his seat and watched them closely.

"Burman," continued Pearson, after a long pause, "was stabbed through the heart. I can't figure it out. Liebe, here, seems to believe Selmont did it, but I'm not so sure."

"Looks mighty suspicious," declared Liebe positively.

"Who's Selmont?" asked Bates.

"A chemist who has been working with them," explained Pearson. "He was working in the same room where Burman was sleeping when he was stabbed, and as far as I can learn was the only one in the room at the time. But he doesn't act to me as though he had done it. I'm no detective, though, and he may be fooling me."

"What time did it happen?"

"About five yesterday afternoon. The coroner has been there, but I took charge for the Government and nothing has been touched—waiting for you. It looked like a case for you Secret Service men to handle."

"Yes?" asked the detective.

"Here we are," added the colonel, as the car turned from the road into a long drive and up in front of a large, old-fashioned house, set well back in a clump of maples. The grounds around the house, evidently once well kept, were heavy with undergrowth and weeds. The paint had long since peeled off, leaving the house a dirty brown.

"Liebe and Burman rented this place to carry on their experiments," said Pearson, as the three men descended at the front door. "There's no one living within five miles from here, and they're doing their outdoor work back in the hills there a couple of miles away."

Pearson led the way up the steps and into the house. He threw open the door to a room at the end of the short hall. Stepping aside, he motioned Bates to enter.

The room, evidently once a large drawing-room, had been converted into a rough laboratory. Along one side ran a long bench, above which were several shelves covered with large bottles, test tubes and various kinds of chemical apparatus. Smaller benches were placed at intervals throughout the room, each covered with zinc. Although the windows at the end

and side had been thrown open, a heavy odor of gases and chemicals permeated the room.

But it was to the rough army cot near the wall to the right of the door that Bates turned. Save for the short handle of a knife protruding from his breast the man lying on the cot might have been asleep. Evidently he had been killed instantly, without warning, while sleeping. His arms were thrown up above his head as though, exhausted, he had flung himself on the cot and fallen asleep at once. Only a small blood-stain showed above the knife, which had evidently been driven with such force as to penetrate clear to the hilt.

His face, like that of a man who has undergone great mental strain, was thin and drawn, but showed no evidence of struggle or pain. That he had sought the cot for a short nap before continuing with his experiments was evidenced by the white apron and dust cap he wore.

"Hasn't been touched?" asked Bates, turning to Pearson. Liebe, a look of repugnance on his face, had refused to enter the room and had hurried up the stairs to his own laboratory.

"No," answered Pearson, "not a thing has been touched in the room."

"Good!" Bates bent over to examine the knife. "Never saw one just like this," he murmured. "Pretty short in the handle." Taking a small magnifying-glass from his pocket, he examined the handle closely, and dusted it with a white powder.

"No fingerprints," he said, straightening up. "Must have worn gloves."

Grasping the handle, with a quick tug he jerked the knife from the body.

"That's funny," he breathed, walking toward the window. "Heft that, will you?" He handed the knife to Pearson, who juggled it gingerly for a moment and handed it back.

"Pretty light in the handle, isn't it?" he commented, puzzled.

"Yes, that's it." Bates placed the knife on the window-sill. The blade, more like that of a stiletto than a knife, was long and slender and unusually heavy for its size. The handle, made of light wood, was short and round, more like a screwdriver handle. In the end of the handle a small round hole had been bored.

"I've seen lots of knives," said Bates, "but I never before saw one like this." He turned and looked about the room.

"Where was Selmont working?"

"Over there," said Pearson, pointing to a small bench near the window. "If he's telling the truth his back was turned to Burman. Burman and he had been working here together and Burman went to the cot to take a short nap while Selmont went on working."

"What that unusual?" asked Bates.

"No. It seems that Burman was in the habit of doing his most intricate experiments at night, and during the three or four months they have been working here had got into the habit of dropping to the cot for a short nap each afternoon."

"I see. And no one could have got to him without Selmont knowing it, I suppose?"

"Yes, and no. Certainly no one could have come in through the window, and it's doubtful if anyone could have come in through the door and stabbed him without Selmont arousing and seeing it. If he's telling the truth he was so seated that the door opening would have attracted his attention. He was here working away when Liebe and I came in and didn't even know that Burman was dead—or says he didn't."

"And he hadn't left the room?"

"Says he didn't. It wouldn't be possible that Burman committed suicide, would it?"

"N-o-o, I should say not. He couldn't have driven the knife in so far and as straight as it was. And if he had killed himself his hands wouldn't have been up over his head that way and the knife wouldn't have gone in so straight—more at an angle."

"Damn funny—I'd bet my pay Selmont didn't kill him. He wouldn't be such a fool as to do it and stay right here that way. He would have picked some other time and place."

"That may be just what he's figuring on—that you would work it out that way."

"Never thought of that," confessed Pearson.

Bates turned back to the body on the cot, and went carefully through the dead man's pockets. A cigar case, a knife, some keys and a couple of letters from chemical firms were all the clothes contained.

"Any relatives?" asked Bates.

"Liebe say there are none."

"Better have the undertaker come and get the body then."

"All right." Pearson stepped out into the hall to the telephone.

Bates flung himself into a chair. Why had Burman been killed? Had Selmont done it? If so, why? Surely not for the gas formula unless the man was a ruthless crook, because it wouldn't be necessary to kill. Perhaps it was some private grudge and had nothing to do with the formula.

A noise outside the window now attracted his attention. Looking out he saw Liebe standing some distance away under a large oak tree in angry conversation with a tall, dark-complexioned man of about forty. An expression of amused contempt played over the man's face as Liebe talked.

The door opened and Colonel Pearson stepped into the room.

"Undertaker 'll come right out," he said.

"Who's that talking with Liebe?" asked Bates, pointing out the window.

"That's Selmont."

At that instant the man turned and looked toward the house. Bates drew back quickly from the window, and they peered cautiously out again. There was something vaguely familiar about the dark man, but he could not place him. Was it the man's face or his bearing? Perhaps he had seen his picture somewhere, he decided, puzzled.

"I wish you'd send for him and have him brought in here," said Bates, turning back to Colonel Pearson.

Stepping to the door, Pearson called to his chauffeur on the porch. A moment later Bates, watching through the window, saw the chauffeur walk across the lawn and speak to the dark-featured man. With an angry gesture of dismissal, Liebe turned and strode back into the trees, while Selmont followed the chauffeur to the house.

"Your name's Selmont?" asked Bates as the man stepped into the room and closed the door.

"Yes," answered the other easily, his face blank and unemotional. He refused to look at the figure of the dead man beside the door.

"You were working here yesterday afternoon when Mr. Burman was killed?"

"Yes." The man stuck a cigarette between his lips, lit it and tossed the match carelessly through the window. He appeared bored and indifferent.

"And you didn't know he was dead?"

"No."

"Isn't it rather peculiar that a man could be killed in the same room with you and you know nothing about it?"

"Yes, very strange, but it's true. Who are you, anyway?" Selmont demanded, coolly.

Bates displayed his badge, but it appeared to make no impression on Selmont.

"Oh, I see," he remarked, easily; "a detective, eh?"

"Yes," snapped Bates, aroused by the man's insolent bearing. "What'd you kill Mr. Burman for?" He shot the question suddenly, harshly, pushing his face close to Selmont's.

With a half smile, half sneer, Selmont shrugged his shoulders.

"But I didn't kill him," he said unmoved.

"Where'd you get the knife?" persisted Bates, roughly.

Selmont threw out his hands in a gesture of impatience.

"I said I knew nothing about it."

"What were you and Liebe talking about over there under the trees?"

For a moment Selmont appeared undecided.

"It was a private matter," he said after a pause.

"What was it?"

"Nothing I can tell you," retorted Selmont, stubbornly.

"All right—we'll find out in due time. That's all now—but don't leave the place—understand?"

"Right." With a grin Selmont bowed and left the room.

"What d'you think?" demanded Colonel Pearson, as the door closed.

"Don't know," answered Bates, puzzled. "I'd swear I've seen that fellow somewhere—but I can't place him. He acts suspiciously—as though he knew something he's trying to hide. There is evidently more to this thing than we think."

"Maybe he wanted to get the formula?"

"Yes, but he wouldn't have to kill Burman. If he was after that he could have managed it some other way without committing murder and jamming things all up this way. No, if he did it he had some other reason. How did Liebe and Burman happen to be working on this thing together?" he asked abruptly.

"I'm not sure," replied Pearson, "but they were both pretty high up in their line, and I imagine they got together and decided to pool their knowledge."

"How did they get along together—do you know?"

"All right, as far as I know, except over the proposition of selling their secret. Burman, I think, had a little more of the patriotic feeling in him and was willing to sell to the United States for $250,000, but Liebe seems to think that was too small a sum, and has been wanting to dicker with other governments before selling."

"And Burman didn't agree with him?"

"That's about the size of it."

"Suppose we go up and see what Liebe knows about Selmont? I heard him go back upstairs a moment ago, I think."

Liebe's work-room was on the second floor, directly above that used by Burman. As Pearson and Bates entered he was seated at his desk, reading a letter.

"Well," he asked, getting to his feet, "did he confess?"

"No," answered Bates, glancing about the room, which was smaller and less completely given over to chemical apparatus than the one downstairs. "He says he knows nothing about it."

"He naturally would," smiled Liebe. "His story sounds rather far-fetched, though. He seemed to be pretty sore when Burman discharged him, but I didn't think he would take it hard enough to commit murder."

"So Mr. Burman had discharged him, eh?" asked Bates, surprised. "What for?"

"General inefficiency, I guess. He didn't seem to take much care with his work and didn't seem to know as much as he should."

"Who employed him?"

"Why, Burman and I both did, I guess. He came here shortly after we rented this place and asked for a job. He seemed to know his business, so we put him on. You see, none of our chemists know our entire formula. Each is given certain experiments to carry out, but none knows the whole real secret of the discovery."

"Except you and Mr. Burman, eh? And now that Mr. Burman is dead, you are the only one who knows it?"

"Yes," admitted Liebe.

"I can't figure out why Selmont should kill Burman."

"To get the formula, of course."

"But why should it be necessary to kill him? I don't see that that would help any."

"No," assented Liebe, "it looks as though he did it, but I can't see just why."

"I understand, Mr. Liebe, there was some disagreement between you and Mr. Burman as to whether your formula should be sold to the United States Government or offered to some other government. Is that right?"

"Well," said Liebe, resuming his seat and motioning the two to nearby chairs, "not exactly a disagreement. I thought we should get a better price, but Burman seemed to consider it would be holding our government up to ask for more. That's all."

"I see. And it hasn't been offered to any other government?"

"No."

"Are you sure, Mr. Liebe?"

"I guess I ought to know," answered Liebe, annoyed by the insistence.

"Yes," soothed Bates. "Something just occurred to me. If it had been offered to some other government," he exclaimed, "or suggested even, and Burman refused to deal with them they might, without your knowledge, have arranged to do away with Burman so they could deal with you. Might not that be possible?"

"Ye-es," admitted Liebe, dubiously. "If it had been offered to some other govern-

ment, but it hasn't. You think Selmont might have been employed by some other government?"

"Yes."

"Well, you may be right at that."

"I'm much obliged to you, Mr. Liebe," said Bates, getting to his feet. He turned toward the door. "By the way," he remarked, apparently at random, "I suppose that any offer that has been made the United States regarding the formula will have to be lived up to, regardless of Mr. Burman's death?"

For an instant Liebe stared, puzzled, at Bates.

"That's up to me, now, Mr. Bates," he said stiffly, turning back to his desk.

Pearson followed Bates down the stairs and out on the front steps before he spoke.

"I'll bet he's offered that formula to some other government and expects to take advantage of Burman's death," he remarked.

"Maybe," agreed Bates. "He won't overlook any opportunities. I wouldn't be surprised if, without having any actual knowledge, he had a pretty good idea who killed his partner. He may be right, at that, in thinking that Selmont did it, without actually knowing who hired Selmont."

"That's about the way it looks to me," said Pearson.

As they spoke Selmont appeared from around the corner of the house and stepped to the porch.

"Say, Selmont," called Bates.

"Yes," said Selmont, halting.

"Did Mr. Burman fire you yesterday morning?"

Selmont appeared to hesitate.

"No, he did not." His slow, stilted pronunciation was hardly that of an American, although in every other respect he could pass as a native born.

"What's your nationality?" demanded Bates, bluntly.

"Why, American, of course," drawled Selmont.

"Oh, of course," insinuated Bates lightly. "Now, listen here, Selmont. Things look pretty bad here for you. You say you know nothing about Mr. Burman's death, but you'll have a mighty hard time proving it—eh?"

"Oh, I don't know," shrugged Selmont.

"Well, you will—and if you're guilty I'll get you, but if you're innocent I want to help you all I can. I think you'd better tell me what you and Mr. Liebe were talking about under the trees a while ago, don't you?"

"Why, if you're so anxious, I don't suppose it matters much. He told me to get my things and get out—discharged me."

"Discharged you?" ejaculated Bates, puzzled.

"Yes. Said 'Get out of here. We don't want you around here.' But you said for me to stay, so here I am."

A curious expression crept over Bates's face as Selmont spoke.

"Thanks," he said shortly. "You stay right here. You won't get very far away if you try to make a break."

"What's it all about?" asked Pearson, as Selmont entered the house.

Bates sat down on the edge of the porch.

"Well, colonel, I've only got my suspicions now, and I think I'd better keep them to myself until I'm more sure. If you'll loan me your car I'd like to drive into the village for a little while. But I'll tell you this—if I'm right, you're due for a surprise."

"Well, it's your case," grumbled Pearson.

"Yes," said Bates, dryly, "it's my case. If you'll call your car now I'll be going. Keep your eye on Selmont, and don't let him get away."

Fifteen minutes later he was back in Hardenville. Dismissing the chauffeur with instructions to report back to Colonel Pearson, he made at once for the nearest telephone booth, located in the town's only drugstore. Emerging, he strolled across the street to the railroad station.

Darkness was falling rapidly when a large touring car roared down the road, coming from the direction of Washington, and drew up at the station. Almost before the car stopped Bates was across the platform and into the tonneau. With a few brief instructions to the driver he turned to the two broad-shouldered men seated in the rear.

At the entrance to the lane leading to the house where Burman had been killed the car stopped and the two men got out.

"Now, remember, no one in or no one out but the one man," called Bates as the driver turned the machine about and headed back toward Washington.

It was late at night when the machine stopped at the side entrance to the Treasury building in Washington. Displaying his badge to the guard at the narrow night door, Bates hurried into the building and along the dark, tunnel-like corridor to a room at the other side of the building. Beneath the door a light shone faintly.

"Did you get the pictures, chief?" he asked as he opened the door and stood before a tall, gray-haired man seated behind a desk.

"Yes, here they are," replied the other man, reaching for a large manila envelope. He spread out on the desk a large collection of pictures of men and women in various costumes.

Without a word Bates went over the pictures and studied them closely.

"That's the fellow," he said, picking up a small photograph and handing it to the chief.

"William Gallient," said the other man, reading the back of the picture.

"Going under the name of Selmont now," nodded Bates. "What's the dope on him?"

"Sort of an international worker," answered Chief Wharton. "Works for whatever country wants to pay him. Supposed to have been working in this country for the Germans during the war, but we could never get anything on him. He may be working a lone hand this time—expecting to get the formula and sell it some place across the water."

"Is he a chemist?"

"Don't know. He seems to know a little of everything—cold-blooded devil, and smart as they make them. We've never been able to tie him down, though we've almost had him several times."

"Well, that about gives me the dope on that fellow, all right." Bates got to his feet. He pulled an envelope from his pocket and handed it to Chief Wharton.

"There's a telegram in this that I wish you'd send at exactly seven-thirty to-morrow morning. I don't care how you handle it afterward, just so you send it."

"All right, I'll get it off," said Wharton. Bates left the building and hurried up Pennsylvania avenue to his apartment.

Nine o'clock next morning found him speeding toward Hardenville in the same automobile he had used the previous morning. As the car drew near the railroad station Bates, from the rear seat, directed the driver to stop. Crouching low on the floor he waited until a long whistle from up the railroad track announced an approaching train. As the train halted a man in a long overcoat ran from the station and climbed up the steps of the last coach.

"That's good," breathed Bates as the train pulled quickly around the bend toward Washington. He directed the chauffeur to drive him back to the house where Burman had been killed.

"Everything all right?" he asked, as Colonel Pearson came down the front steps to meet him.

"Yes," answered the colonel. "Liebe had to go to Washington a while ago—got a telegram from the War Department."

"Oh, did he?"?" murmured Bates, with apparent surprise. "Where's Selmont?"

"In the house, I think."

Bates turned and walked back toward the trees at the side of the house. One of the men he had placed to watch the premises stepped out to meet him.

"Did anyone try to get out?" he asked.

"Yeh, there was a tall fellow tried to leave last night—seemed to be sneaking out. Said he had to go to Hardenville to buy some things, but there wasn't nothing doing."

"Yes," said Bates, leading the way to the house and opening the front door, "I thought he'd try to make a sneak." At that instant Selmont descended the stairway from the second story.

"Selmont," said Bates sternly, "I thought I told you not to leave the place."

"Well, what of it?" demanded Selmont insolently. "I'm not taking orders from you."

"You will now," snapped Bates angrily. "You're under arrest."

"What for?" stammered Selmont, startled. "I know nothing of——"

"No, you know nothing of this, either, eh?" He held out the photograph which Chief Wharton had given him the night before. "Take him, Morris. Better put the cuffs on him."

Without warning Selmont leaped past Bates, struck the other man a crashing blow in the face and flung himself out of the door. Down the steps he leaped and went running across the lawn, head bent low.

Jerking out his revolver, Bates fired twice. With a cry Selmont stumbled and fell flat on the grass. Struggling to his knees, he tried to drag himself to the shelter of the trees, but almost before he could move Bates was upon him.

"Get up," he commanded.

His face distorted with pain, Selmont attempted to stand. His right foot gave way and he sank limply back to the ground.

"Hit 'im in the foot," said Bates, as the guard came running up. "Hold this gun while I search him. Don't want him shooting up things." Selmont fought fiercely, but was powerless in the hands of the brawny detective who held his arms at his sides while Bates went through his pockets.

"No, no!" he cried desperately, as Bates, reaching inside his coat, pulled out a large manila envelope. Opening the flap, Bates took out a large sheet of paper, covered with, to him, unintelligible hieroglyphics.

"I'll bet a dollar that's the formula," said the officer, folding the paper and placing it back in the envelope, which he thrust in his pocket. "Where'd you get it?" he demanded, turning roughly on the whimpering Selmont.

But Selmont, thoroughly cowed, only shook his head. He was dragged, unresisting, back into the house, while Bates, hurrying up the stairs, opened the door to Liebe's office. Colonel Pearson, stepping from another room on the same floor, followed him into the office.

"Selmont just tried to make a break," panted Bates. He showed Pearson the paper he had taken from Selmont. "He had this—I'll bet it's the formula, isn't it?"

Pearson studied the paper closely. "Yes," he said, "I imagine that's it—or at least a good part of it. I doubt whether they'd have the whole thing on one sheet that way."

Bates's eye fell on the small steel safe bolted to the floor at the side of Liebe's desk.

"That's how he got it," he said, pointing to the door of the safe, which hung halfway open. Stooping, he examined the door. "Acetylene," he breathed, running a finger about a jagged hole where the combination knob had been. "He must have worked fast. Came up here right after Liebe left, I guess."

"Well, I'll be hanged!" exclaimed Colonel Pearson. "Liebe was right after all. But why," he asked, puzzled, "should he have to kill Burman?"

"That's what I can't figure out," admitted Bates, swinging open the safe door. "You watch the hall, will you, Colonel, while I examine these papers a moment. We may find something here." Pearson stepped out into the hall and closed the door.

Liebe had said, and repeated it emphatically, that he had had no negotiations with any other governments. But Bates wasn't so sure. Had he been dickering with some government, and had that government hired Selmont to put Burman out of the way? It was to find this out that Bates had asked Chief Wharton to send the telegram calling Liebe to Washington, so that he might have a chance to examine Liebe's papers. Selmont had saved him the trouble of opening the safe.

The detective had searched the safe, finding nothing of importance, and was about to close the door and call in Colonel Pearson, when he stopped suddenly, slipped to his knees and stuck his head inside the safe. With a muttered exclamation he stood up and turned on the light above his head, then knelt down again in amazement. Mumbling to himself, he crept around to the rear of the safe.

An exultant shout escaped his lips as he

leaped to his feet and threw open the door to the hall.

"Come here, Colonel!" he called, excitedly.

At three o'clock that afternoon a hired automobile drove up the driveway and stopped before the house. Liebe descended, paid the driver, and climbed the steps to the porch.

As he opened the door Bates stepped out from the hall.

"Hello, Mr. Liebe," he said cheerily. "Well, we got our man."

"Did you?" cried Liebe. "Did he confess?"

"No, not yet," admitted Bates, "but I guess I've got the goods on him, all right. He's in here." He opened the door to Burman's laboratory and stepped aside to allow Liebe to enter.

At the other end of the room, near the window, stood the officer's assistant. Beside him, sagging limply against the workbench, sat Selmont. A sullen, despairing expression played over his face.

"Ah, they got you, did they?" cried Liebe, advancing into the room. Selmont made no answer. Liebe, his eyes blinking rapidly, turned to Bates. "Well, why don't you take him away?"

"Well," confessed Bates, "I can't get this thing exactly straight in my mind, just yet. You say Selmont was sitting over there at that bench where he is now when you and Colonel Pearson came into the room?"

"Yes, yes," exclaimed Liebe impatiently.

"And Burman was lying on the cot?"

"Yes, yes."

Bates appeared buried in thought for several minutes, looking from Selmont to the cot, then back to Selmont again.

"I think I've got it figured out how he did it," he said, straightening up. "Mr. Liebe, would you mind taking Burman's place there on the cot just a moment? I want to get this thing in my mind."

"W—what?" stammered Liebe, startled. Then, as Bates repeated his request, eyeing him intently, he slowly walked toward the cot. "I—I don't like this," he shuddered.

"It's all right," soothed Bates, easily. "I just want to see this thing right. You watch Selmont, Morris," he called to the detective at the window.

Hesitating, reluctant, Liebe lay down on the cot and slowly placed his arms on the pillow above his head. Turning his back Bates walked toward the sullen Selmont.

Suddenly a wild shriek split the silence of the room. Whirling quickly, Bates saw Liebe, his eyes fixed with horror on the ceiling, spring from the cot and throw himself across the room. Almost at the instant a knife fell from the ceiling and buried itself with a thud in the cot.

Jabbering inanely, Liebe flung himself at the door, only to find it locked.

"Well, I think that shows who's guilty," said Bates calmly, drawing a revolver and covering the cowering Liebe. "You thought you had it pretty smooth, didn't you? I'll admit you did, at that. Here, put these on." He tossed a pair of handcuffs to Liebe, who, still muttering to himself, weakly complied.

A knock sounded on the door. A key grated in the lock and Colonel Pearson entered.

"Did it work?" he asked, anxiously.

"Like a clock," answered Bates, pointing to the knife buried in the cot, then to the ceiling directly above, where a small round hole showed plainly. "It was pretty smooth, all right.

"As I figured it out," he continued, "Liebe knew that Burman took a nap there on the cot every afternoon and when he and Burman got to scrapping over the price of their formula he decided to get rid of Burman. Liebe probably had a better offer from some other government. He fixed up that arrangement under his safe so that when he pulled a little knob inside the safe a piece of the ceiling would slide back, leaving the knife to drop free. He had a little mirror arrangement fixed in the back of the safe so that when he opened the hole he could see just what position Burman was lying in. Then all he had to do was to slash the cord holding the knife up and the spring would shoot it straight down."

"Well, I'll be——" began Colonel Pearson.

"Yes, that ring in the knife and the way it was made had me bothered. He waited

until he had you there in the office with him so he could have a good alibi, then cut her loose. I'll bet he had to consult his safe several times while you were talking with him, didn't he?"

"Y-es," asserted Pearson, "I remember, now, he did."

"Selmont being in here made it all the better—Liebe could fasten it on him."

"But," asked Pearson, puzzled, "what's Selmont's connection with it?"

"Selmont is known in Washington as an international crook—ready to do anything for money. I guess he was up here trying to get the formula so he could sell it to some European government. Whether he was hired to do it, or was working on a chance that he would sell it later, doesn't matter now. Isn't that about the size of it, Selmont?"

"Yes," nodded Selmont, sullenly.

"I thought so." Bates turned to Liebe. "You can give the credit to Selmont," he said, "because if he hadn't been so anxious to get the papers and get away that he opened the safe, you might have got by with your little scheme. I was going to go through your safe, but the job Selmont did rather uncovered things for me. I don't know what government you were dickering with, and I don't care—I guess our own government 'ill take charge. Eh, Colonel?"

AN OPIUM CONSPIRACY

WHAT might be called the great opium conspiracy occurred before the war. It was at that time the Federal authorities discovered that opium was being smuggled into New York in unusual quantities. They learned of the fact, but for many weary weeks and months they were unable to place their hands on the culprits. A watch was placed on all incoming steamers—especially those of the Hamburg-American Line. Special agents were sent down the bay to surprise the smugglers and they themselves were surprised by not finding any of the wicked lawbreakers.

One day Hugo Grobe, the steward of a Hamburg-American Line ship, was overheard to whisper the word opium to two sailors. The sailors and the steward were detained and searched, but nothing contraband was found on them. But as they were about to go away one of the searchers cried: "I'd like to look those fellows over. There's something curious about the way their pockets bulge out in the middle."

They were taken to the little house at the end of the pier and compelled to undress. It was noticed that each one of them wore a curious brown belt shaped like a life preserver. The belts were taken off them and found to be filled with prepared opium. The sailors broke down immediately. "We were merely tools," said one of them, "and the steward here has been getting rich as our expense."

It was discovered that Grobe, who had both shrewdness and imagination, had mapped out a most elaborate programme for the conduct of his smuggling business. He had an agent in Bremen and one in New York and utilized the poor sailors to bridge over the gap between the two points. He fully expected to make a million dollars, but his scheme was nipped in the bud and all that he actually cleared was a few thousand. He was tried, convicted and sent to the Atlanta penitentiary.

Grobe was no ordinary smuggler. While he was in prison he concocted a scheme for continuing the business. But a letter which he was sending to a retired sea captain at Bremen was intercepted and this spoiled his carefully laid plans. However, he was released on parole to see if he would carry out the game. He did—or tried to. He cabled his confederate in Bremen and in a few weeks a lot of opium was found in shotguns shipped from Germany.

He had another scheme for bringing the drug over here in canisters shaped like potatoes and even cabled to have the opium sent to Vera Cruz, but it was when he started for Mexico that he was rearrested.

The Secret of the Black Bag

By HAROLD F. PODHASKI

PART TWO

CHAPTER FIVE

"IF you wish to save funeral expenses, old chappy, don't try any funny business," Bradford advised the man calmly, at the same time giving the automatic a suggestive flourish. "I won't hesitate to shoot if you compel me to do so."

The other laughed a little bitterly.

"Don't worry," he shrugged. "I'm not quite a fool."

"All right, we understand each other, then. Now if you'll just reach that switch right there behind you and turn on the lights, we'll see what's to be done about it."

"My friend, if you accept my advice, you will leave the lights as they are."

Bradford laughed.

"And give you a better chance to slip something over on me, eh?" he asked dryly. "No, thanks."

"Nothing of the kind," the man protested quickly. "You have my gun, so what possible chance have I got of slipping anything over on you? I assure you that I have a very good reason for advising you not to turn on the lights."

"Say, old fellow, I don't seem to make your game," Bradford demurred a little doubtfully, rather impressed by the quiet assurances in the other's tone. "I'm afraid you'll have to be a bit more explicit. Just what do you mean?"

The man hesitated a long moment before replying.

"Well, to be frank with you about it," he said presently, "I don't want you to know my identity. Not entirely for my own sake, but also for yours. It would be equally as unpleasant for you as it would for me—perhaps a bit more so."

Instantly then Bradford remembered what he had seen through the keyhole a few moments before—the profile of this man's face that had seemed to leave such a distinct impression upon his mind that it was the face of some one he knew, some one with whom he often came in contact. He tried again to place that face, but, as before, the effort proved unavailing. After a moment or two he said:

"Nevertheless I am going to turn on the lights. For one thing, you have aroused my curiosity, and unless I appease it I'll be dreaming about this incident for the rest of my life. For another thing, I have already seen your face through the keyhole yonder, while you were kneeling out there in the hall trying to manipulate my lock."

"Apparently you didn't get a very good look."

"On the contrary, I did."

The other laughed.

"Oh, I see. Just been kidding me along a little, eh? Well, if you've already recognized me then——"

"But the trouble is that I haven't," Bradford interrupted him. "I admit that your face did seem very familiar to me, and yet, for some reason or other, I don't seem able to place you. Suppose you help me out a bit."

For answer the man reached behind him, pushed the button, and turned on the lights.

"Now I *know* you're kidding me," he laughed. "Well, here I am, old fellow. You've caught me red-handed busting into

your room like a thief. What's the answer?"

Bradford, instead of replying, carefully studied the face of the man in front of him. It was a face that he seemed to know very well, one that somehow or other seemed to associate itself with his everyday life. And yet, strangely enough, it was several moments before the remarkable truth dawned upon him. When it finally did he understood why the brief glimpse of that profile he had obtained through the keyhole had made so distinct an impression upon his mind.

For he might indeed have been looking at his own reflection in a mirror; the face of this man was an exact replica of his own. In fact, so remarkable was the similarity between them, so exactly alike was each and every feature of their two faces, that it would have been practically impossible to tell them apart.

"I see now why your face seemed so familiar to me," Bradford said, at length breaking the silence. "People would say, I suppose, that we were doubles. I don't wonder that I wasn't able to place you. The idea never occurred to me that it might be my own face I saw through the keyhole. Remarkable coincidence, too, that out of the several hundred rooms there are in this hotel you should pick mine for your second-story work, isn't it?"

The man stared at him a little incredulously a moment before replying.

"You said a while ago that you didn't seem to make my game," he remarked presently. "The case is now reversed; I don't seem to make yours. What's the idea?"

"The idea?" Bradford repeated quizzically. "The idea of what?"

"Why, all this foolish talk about my face seeming familiar to you and that sort of stuff. Good Lord! I guess it ought to be, hadn't it?"

"Inasmuch as it appears to be an exact replica of my own, I suppose it had," Bradford laughed.

"Yes, and inasmuch as we happen to be twin brothers, all the more so. I still think you're trying to kid me a little, Jim. Seems mighty strange a fellow wouldn't know his own brother, even if it had been five years since he saw him last."

It was some moments before Bradford replied, and when he spoke again it was in a tense, unnatural tone of voice, as though some powerful emotion gripped him.

"No, not strange at all when you understand the reason," he said at last. "Remarkable as it may seem to you, I don't know my own identity, haven't known it now for the past four years. If you'll just sit down on the bed over there I'll tell you the story and you'll understand."

The other did so after a moment's hesitation, while Bradford, tossing the revolver on top of the dresser, drew up a chair and sat down in front of him.

"They tell me," he began presently, "that I was picked up by a field ambulance in the Argonne Forest region on September the twenty-first in the last year of the war. Personally, however, I don't remember anything about it. At any rate, it seems that I was very badly wounded and that for a long time my life was despaired of. Finally, though, they pulled me through, and ultimately I was discharged, apparently normal and fully recovered in every way. Physically, at least, my recovery was complete, and mentally, too, it seems, in all respects save one. But in that one respect Fate appears to have played me a rather scurvy trick. I haven't the faintest recollection of anything that ever happened in my life prior to the time I first came to my senses in a field hospital in France some four years ago. My identification tag seems to have been missing, and they told me afterwards that nothing whatever was found about my clothing by which my identity could be established. So, you see, I don't know a thing in the world about myself save what has happened the past four years, not even my real name. Bradford—Julian Bradford—is the name I go by; I found it in the pages of a book I happened to read during my convalescence.

"The reason for this loss of memory, the doctors told me, was a piece of shrapnel that had imbedded itself in my head somewhere near the base of the skull and pressed against some vital spot in my brain. An

operation might have cured me, but they said it would be best to wait two or three years, because at that time the chances would have been fifty to one against my coming out of it alive.

"For the past four years I have tried every means to establish my identity, to find out something about myself. I would gladly undergo an operation, but it would require a highly skilled specialist, and my finances haven't been such that this was possible. I have searched everywhere trying to find some one who might have known me in the past, who might be able to help me out. But until you came here to-night that effort also has proven unavailing.

"You say that we are twin brothers; I can well believe it when I look at myself in the mirror. I ought to be glad, I suppose, that I am at last to learn the truth about myself. Yet your coming here like this—well, I almost wish that the secret of my identity had always remained a secret. I would have perhaps been better off if it had."

CHAPTER SIX

IT was several moments after Bradford had finished this remarkable statement before the man on the bed offered any comment.

"Yes, maybe it would," he agreed at last, but with a shrug that was expressive of his own indifferences regarding the matter. "However, that's neither here nor there, now that the cat's out of the bag. On the other hand, as you are several thousand dollars better off than you were at this time yesterday, I don't see where you've got much cause to complain."

"Several thousand dollars better off?" Bradford repeated doubtfully, wondering if it were possible that he could be referring to the money contained in the black grip. "Just what do you mean by that? You must remember that my memory of the past is entirely blank. Everything will necessarily have to be explained to me as though I were a total stranger. Suppose you begin at the beginning and tell me the whole of it. In the first place, I confess to a lively curiosity regarding my name; what does it happen to be?"

"Bookhardt—James Bookhardt, and what seems a rather unusual coincidence is the fact that your initials are exactly the same as those of the name you adopted. It certainly seems strange that I should be sitting here talking to you like this, telling you who you are, even what your name is. I've heard of such cases as yours before, but really never believed that such things actually happened—that a man could totally lose his memory and still remain comparatively normal in other respects."

"Nevertheless they do happen," Bradford informed him. "Loss of memory is by no means uncommon; there were several cases similar to mine came out of the war. However, please go on. What did you mean, for instance, by saying that I am several thousand dollars better off than I was twenty-four hours ago?"

"Well, to explain that I will have to go back several years. As I said before, we are twin brothers, and so far as I know we haven't any other relatives. Our parents died when we were kids, and we were brought up by an uncle. When he died some ten years ago he left us property valued at about $50,000, but which we were not to receive until we became of age. In the meantime, however, along came the war, and we both enlisted, were assigned to the same company, and went over with the Rainbow Division. A few months later you were transferred to another division, and after that I lost track of you.

"We became of age in 1918, and when I came back from France, therefore, in the early part of 1919, I took over my share of the inheritance. I turned the whole property into money, and it went through my fingers like a sieve; in less than two years I was practically broke again.

"All this time, of course, I kept wondering what in the world could have become of you, because I hadn't received any word of you at all save one letter you wrote about three months after you were transferred to the other division. I concluded finally that

you must have been killed, and this belief was further confirmed by the war department when word came that you had been reported missing and that it was believed you had died in action. Naturally, in the event of your death, your share of the property would descend to me, and when I finally found myself practically broke again I tried to obtain it.

"This proved difficult, however, because the war department could not officially confirm your death, and under the circumstances I was told by the executor of the estate that I would have to wait a certain number of years before I could legally gain possession.

"Well, I confess that this didn't appeal to me at all, because I needed money too badly to wait that long to get it, so I began trying to figure out some plan whereby I could get around this technicality. When it became apparent that I couldn't do it legally, frankly I decided to try another method.

"I happened to be well enough acquainted with the man who was left in charge of this estate as executor when our father died, to know that he was not above stepping outside the law if he thought that he could thus add a few shekels to his own purse, and I thought that if he were offered a big enough price he could probably be bribed. I tested out the theory, and sure enough found him susceptible.

"To make a long story short, our agreement was that he turn all this property, your property, you understand, into money, and then split it. There didn't seem to be much of a risk in doing this, because you must remember that we felt practically certain you were dead.

"At any rate, within a week he had succeeded in turning this whole property into money, but when the time came to divide it I concluded that I had been a fool to offer him half, and I tried to renege on that offer. This brought on an argument, in the course of which I lost my temper and knocked him down. He fell in such a manner that his head struck against the corner of a desk, and it put him out completely. In fact, when I knelt down to examine him I thought sure he was dead.

"Well, the money was there on the table, stacks of it—something over $30,000. I made my get-away and took every penny of it with me. You see, I figured that I had already committed murder, so I didn't think I could be much worse off if I added robbery to it. Besides, I was certain that you must be dead, and in that case the money was really mine, anyhow. At any rate, I took it with me.

"The next day I learned that I hadn't killed this man at all, that the fall hadn't even injured him very much. And he had told the whole story to the police, according to what I read in the newspapers, even confessed his own part in it; I presume he ran that risk in order to get revenge on me. I was in for a good stretch up the river, I knew, if they ever caught me, so I decided that the best plan would be to lay low a few weeks. And as I didn't want to take any chance of this money being found in my possession, I looked about until I found what seemed to be a suitable hiding-place for it.

"However, as luck would have it, it didn't do me much good to lay low, because they caught me anyhow. I was tried, convicted and sentenced to serve two years on this fellow's testimony, but they never were able to find out what I had done with the money. I managed to keep that a secret.

"I was released from the State pen yesterday morning, six months off for good behavior. Last night I went to the place where I had hid the money to find out if it was still there; it was—and so were you. What happened then you know as much about as I do."

For fully half a minute after the man had finished Bradford remained silent, staring incredulously into his face, wondering if it could be possible that he was really awake. That so strange a thing could have actually happened seemed utterly beyond belief.

"Good Lord! You don't mean to say it was you I had the fight with under the bridge surely?" he asked at last, his tone incredulous.

The other answered with an expressive shrug.

"It was certainly no one else," he remarked dryly. "Came near finishing me, too, I'll tell you. I hate to think where I'd be now if I hadn't been a mighty good swimmer. I managed to reach the shore, though, just in time to save myself from going over the falls. When I saw you climb out with the grip of course I knew you had the money, so I followed you, determined to get it back somehow or other if I could. At the time, you understand, I hadn't any more idea of your identity than you had of mine. I got my first good sight of you while you were in that restaurant eating, and you could have knocked me down with a feather when I recognized you. Still, I needed that money, and I decided that I was going to get it if possible, part of it at least. It was a dirty trick for a fellow to play on his brother, of course, but after a year and a half stretch on the rock pile I felt that I had earned it. You don't know what it does to a guy to put in a year and a half in prison."

"And you really mean to say, then, that all this money actually belongs to *me?*" Bradford asked, still rather inclined to the belief that he must surely be dreaming.

"Of course, every penny of it. It's your share of the inheritance. It really ought to be a great deal more, but in order to realize immediate cash on the property it had to be sold at a sacrifice."

Bradford laughed somewhat dazedly.

"Thirty-one thousand dollars," he mused, "is a great big plenty—for you and me both."

(*The end.*)

MAID HELD AS BURGLAR

ROSE O'GRADY, a 15-year-old maid employed in the home of Dr. J. Bennett Mirkin, the Bronx, New York, was arrested the other day on a charge of juvenile delinquency growing out of an attempt the other night to rob the place.

When Dr. and Mrs. Mirkin drove some friends to their homes one night they left Rose in the kitchen washing the dinner dishes. A little later, according to the physician's mother-in-law, Mrs. Jennie Zeidman, who was in her room on the second floor of the dwelling, Rose ran upstairs shouting that there were burglars in the house. Mrs. Ziedman ran down, accompanied by the girl.

Mrs. Zeidman was about to pass through the portiere door of a room, when Rose shouted: "See! There's his hand!"

Mrs. Zeidman says she grasped one of the curtains and is positive she felt an arm, but was forced to relinquish her hold as Rose cried: "There he goes through the window!" Switching on the light, Mrs. Zeidman found the window open, but no trace of the burglar, who would have had to drop about twenty feet into an areaway.

Detective Hegney of the Simpson Street Station learned from Mrs. Mirkin that a gold wrist watch, $16 in cash and several other articles of jewelry were missing. The detective could find no footprints underneath the window, so he had the Mirkins send Rose on an errand and searched her room.

When the girl was confronted by the strap of Mrs. Mirkin's wrist watch which had been found among her effects she confessed, according to Hegney, that she had hidden the watch under the piano and the money and other articles inside the piano.

"I wanted to get a lot of pretty clothes and didn't have any money," she sobbed when arrested.

THE SAVING SCREAM

by Frank E. Williams

DAN THUMMA looked up from the paper he was reading, pushed his spectacles up on his nose, and called for his wife. Dan's voice was strong and deep in spite of his seventy-eight years.

"Maw," called Dan, "I guess we'll get that auto after all."

His wife, eight years his junior, whose kindly face was but sparsely wrinkled and whose plump, rather small body radiated energy, bustled in from the kitchen in a little flurry of excitement.

"What's that, Dan?" she demanded.

Dan looked at her quizzically for a moment or so.

"I said I guess we'll get that auto you're hankering for."

"How?" demanded Mrs. Thumma, sinking into a chair opposite Dan.

"Well, here in the paper is a murder case and a reward of $5,000 for finding out who did it and getting him convicted. I'm figuring on getting the reward."

Mrs. Thumma made an expressive motion of disgust.

"Dan," she exclaimed, "can't you understand that you're retired? You're through. You were a good detective once, but you're on a pension now. You haven't got a chance in the world of getting that reward. Why, you can't even do a thing around the house without me helping you."

"Oh, look here, maw; I'm not laid on the shelf yet. And you just think I need your help all the time. I'll show you and the whole force, too. I've got an idea already about this thing."

"Read about the case," said Mrs. Thumma grudgingly. "I've been that busy I haven't had time to look at the paper this evening."

Dan put his spectacles back to their proper position and took up the paper again. First he read the announcement of the reward, which was made in a half-page ad. in the paper and which read like this:

"A reward of $5,000 will be paid for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons who murdered Bert Delkirk, red and yellow taxi driver, last evening. That sum is now in the hands of President Worden of the First National Bank and is in the shape of a certified check. This company is extremely anxious to find out whether or not this murder is the outgrowth of recent difficulties experienced in the operation of the company's cabs.

(Signed) "M. S. MAGUIRE,
"President Red and Yellow Cab Company."

"You see, maw," Dan explained, "there's been a fight between the Red and Yellow Cab Company and the Black Dot Taxicab Company, and it looks as though Maguire thinks some Black Dot man had killed Delkirk."

"I see," said Mrs. Thumma. "Now read what the paper says about the murder."

Dan then read the news report of the case as follows:

"Bert Delkirk, twenty-seven years old, was found murdered in the driver's seat of his red and yellow taxicab on the lonely Stonecifer road, east of the city, this morning about 9 o'clock. The discovery was made by R. U. Reddings and his son Ralph, two farmers living near the scene who were driving to town in their Ford. They at once reported the case to the police.

"There are well-defined rumors to the effect that the murder was the outcome of recent fights between the Red and Yellow Cab Company and the Black Dot Taxicab Company, resulting in recent court cases involving assault and battery, collisions between cabs of the two companies, etc. It is noteworthy that a check-up to-day on the Black Dot drivers revealed the fact that two of the Black Dot drivers, John Hennessey and Art Moeller, have disappeared and that their disappearance, as near as can be ascertained, occurred shortly after the report of the murder. Both of these young men, it is declared, had recently had fistic and verbal battles with the murdered chauffeur.

"The spot where the crime occurred is a muddy stretch of road which is seldom traveled. Due to this fact the prints made by Delkirk's car tires and another car, from which it is presumed the fatal shot was fired, were plainly visible. The police took a photo of the tracks, which is presented in another column of this paper. They show that Delkirk's car wobbled considerably after his death until it ran into a tree, where it was stopped, with the wheels chugging up the mud until the engine stalled. It is evident that he was not going fast at the time of the shooting, as otherwise considerable damage would have been done to his car when it struck the tree. As it was the radiator was only slightly dented and but one of the headlights was broken.

"The tracks show that another car came abreast of Delkirk's some distance from the tree where Delkirk's car was stopped. This other car paused, then turned, and came back to the city.

"The most important point revealed by the tracks was that the second car was equipped with the distinctive Flash cord tires that have individual treads. All of the Black Dot cars are equipped with these tires.

"An odd feature of the case is the fact that Delkirk, who was found slumped in his driver's seat and who had evidently died instantly from a shot through his heart, was fully dressed, but had no shoes on, and they have not been found.

"A police drag-net has been put out for the missing Black Dot drivers."

Dan again pushed up his spectacles as he finished reading. Then he arose, standing over six feet high, and unbent in spite of his years and strenuous life. He smiled down at his wife.

"You seem to think I'm a poor fish, maw," said Dan, "but you watch my smoke. I'm goin' to get that reward, and we're goin' to get our auto."

"Huh!" ejaculated Mrs. Thumma. "Where are you going now?"

"I'm goin' downtown to look at all of the Black Dot cars. Mebbe I can discover the murderer to-day."

"Huh!" exclaimed Mrs. Thumma again.

As Dan left the house, after putting on his hat and coat, he looked back and saw that his wife had picked up the paper and was studying it thoughtfully.

The weather was raw and disagreeable, having turned to freezing following the rains of the day and night before. In spots ice on the sidewalk made walking difficult. It was, in fact, quite an undertaking for the old police detective to venture from his home on such a day.

But Dan merely buttoned up his ancient overcoat more closely about his throat, bent

his body to the wind, and started downtown, slowly feeling his way over the ice.

His first visit in the heart of the city was to the Black Dot garage. Here, from former experiences when an active detective on the force, he was well acquainted. On a plausible pretext he found no difficulty in getting into the garage and looking around. There were some six or seven of the company's cabs in the place at the time. And all of them he noted were equipped with Flash cord tires.

After a rather meagre inspection Dan went to the Anthony Hotel, where Black Dot cars were always to be found parked waiting for customers. Here he inspected the three cars at the stand. Then, though the day was becoming dark and the blustery wind was bringing a cutting snow, he made his way to the three local railroad depots and inspected several more of the Black Dot cars. While he was at the depot similar cars hurried by. The old detective eyed them eagerly as they rushed past.

At last his inspection was completed and he set off for his home.

"I sure played in luck," he said to himself. "The Black Dot has twenty-six cabs in use—that's what my friend Patrolman Moriarity told me the other day—and I've checked up on every one of them."

Highly pleased, he smiled all the evening while toasting himself at the big base-burner in the dining-room of his home.

Dan, in spite of his wife's scoffings and predictions that he'd catch his death of cold, prepared to go out bright and early on the following morning.

"Now where are you going?" demanded his wife after she had seen to it that he was securely bundled up to face the day's bitter blasts.

"First," said Dan, nothing loath to tell her, "I'm going to the place where that murder happened. Then I'm going to the morgue to look at Delkirk's body. He hasn't any friends or relatives in town, and the paper says the body's still at the morgue."

"I wish you'd forget all this and stay at home," said Mrs. Thumma. "This is no sort of weather for an old man like you to be out in. You'll be catching your death of cold. You can't do things like you used to when you were young."

"Can't I?" cried Dan.

And quite unexpectedly he lifted his wife from her feet in spite of her weight and kissed her before he put her down again.

"Don't be foolish, Dan," exclaimed Mrs. Thumma.

But there was a pleased smile on her lips as Dan departed.

It took the old detective some little time to make the trip to the scene of the murder. In view of the rough weather conditions he would never have tried to make it if he hadn't been so determined. Once there, he glanced briefly at the mired and much-trampled road where the death car had been found, and then he did a rather strange thing. He started walking back from the scene toward the town on one side of the road. As he walked he looked about carefully. In this way he covered a distance of about a half mile. Then, with a disappointed look on his face, he returned to the scene of the crime and started back toward town on the other side of the road, again looking about carefully as he walked.

Dan had covered about a quarter of a mile in this way when, with a sudden triumphant exclamation, he pounced upon something half hidden under a bush.

He was smiling to himself when, some time later, he entered the morgue where Delkirk's body lay.

Here, too, Dan was well known, so he had no difficulty in securing permission to see the body.

Delkirk proved to be a good-looking young fellow, clean and sturdy. Dan looked at the body thoughtfully. After a moment or so he turned to the attendant.

"Is this just the way he was dressed when he was found?" Dan asked.

"Yea," the attendant answered. "Just like that. No shoes. Funny, eh?"

Dan nodded. He was quite thoughtful as he left the morgue.

"Now, why was he dressed up like that and without shoes?" Dan said to himself.

He walked slowly down the street, un-

mindful of the bitter weather, while he revolved this last question in his mind.

Then finally, with an air of triumph, he pounded his right fist into his left hand.

"That's it, of course!" he cried. "I'll go to the public library and make sure of my idea, though."

At the public library Dan secured a road map of the state and of the adjoining state, which was just about seventy miles away, and studied the maps carefully.

His next step was to go to the rooming house, where, according to the morning's newspaper story, Delkirk had been living for six or seven months.

The landlady of the house—it was a rather run-down place—proved to be tall, gaunt and garrulous.

"Sure, I'll show you his room," she said in answer to Dan's question. "But you won't find much left in it. Cops were here and took just about everything the poor fellow had. Delkirk was a good boy, he was; he always paid me ahead of time, and that's more than I can say for a lot of my roomers, I'll tell the world."

The room was, as the landlady had suggested, pretty bare. Apparently all of Delkirk's belongings had been removed, leaving only the furnishings of the room.

It was with a disappointed air that Dan gazed around the place.

"I'd been hoping to find some letters or photographs," he said. "He must have had some photos—photos of girls, you know. Of course he had a lot of girls after him; a good-looking fellow like him would have the girls crazy about him."

"Oh, I don't know," the landlady responded. "I never saw no pictures of girls in his room. I guess he only had one girl."

"Only one?" repeated Dan. "Who was she?"

"I calculate that Maizie Jennings, one of the rich girls working at the Red and Yellow Cab Company, was his sweetie, all right."

"He was pretty strong for her, eh?"

"He sure seemed to be."

"Thanks," said Dan.

Dan next went to a near-by drugstore, where he entered a phone booth and closed the door. Then he called up the Red and Yellow Cab Company and asked for Maizie. The answer was that she wasn't there. She was sick.

"She works there, doesn't she?" queried Dan.

"Yes," came the answer.

"What's her job?" Dan queried.

"She's a stenographer," was the reply.

Dan hung up the receiver and, leaving the phone booth, went to a counter of the store where he saw a city directory. He thumbed through this volume until he came to the "J's" and then ran his finger down the columns until he found Maizie's name.

Dan then called up the girl's home.

"I'd like to speak to Maizie," he said, when a feminine voice answered.

"She's sick in bed and can't come to the phone," was the answer.

Dan nodded slowly to himself as he hung up the receiver after this.

It was now well into the afternoon, Dan's slow movements having consumed a lot of time. But there was one more place that he wished to visit before the day's business was closed. This place was the office of the Red and Yellow Cab Company.

It was in a former residence on a side street about a half block from the main thoroughfare of the city and about a half mile from the courthouse. The residence had been fitted up as a place of business rather roughly for the main part, although President Maguire's office was rather elaborate.

Dan found a pleasant-faced girl in the main office operating the phone.

"I'm Dan Thumma," said Dan, "and I'm one of the fellows who's trying to get the reward Mr. Maguire has offered."

The girl smiled a moment, then her face became sober.

"Mr. Delkirk was a fine fellow," she said. "Every one around here liked him a lot."

"I understand he had a sweetheart in this office," said Dan.

The girl looked interested at this.

"Yes," she said, "Maizie Jennings."

"Where does she work, in the office?" Dan queried.

"Over there."

The girl waved her hand toward a corner where an attractive desk, a row of filing cases and a disappearing top desk with a typewriter upon it indicated a stenographer's quarters. Dan looked at the corner.

"American beauties on her desk!" he exclaimed. "I suppose Delkirk sent them to her?"

"No, I don't think so," the girl responded. "They come every day. I don't believe Delkirk sends them."

"Where do they come from?" questioned the ex-detective.

The girl named a near-by florist's shop.

Dan was late for the evening meal when he finally got home, and his wife was out of patience with him.

"The very idea of you trapesing around all day in this sort of weather at your age!" Mrs. Thumma cried. "If I wasn't here to take care of you, I don't know what would happen. It's a good thing you've got me to look after you."

"I'll say so," Dan responded with a grin.

"Now you eat a good hot supper and then get right to bed."

"I'll eat the hot supper all right, and be mighty glad of it, but I can't get right to bed afterwards."

"Why not?"

"Got to go out again."

His wife viewed Dan askance at this.

"Now, Dan," she exclaimed, "don't go getting any fool notions into your head that you can do night work like you did when you were young. Leave it to the young fellows. I've just got an idea you're planning something for to-night you shouldn't be doing."

Dan looked a trifle sheepish.

"It'll come out all right," he declared. "Trust me for not getting myself into a jam."

About 8 o'clock Dan got up with the announced intention of going out again, and Mrs. Thumma solicitously wound a muffler about his neck and buttoned up his heavy, though worn overcoat.

"Dan," she said at the door, "don't do anything foolish. I'd rather we never have an automobile or anything more than we've got now than for you to get into trouble."

Dan, making no reply, hurried into the frosty, stormy night. Though he wouldn't admit it to himself, his wife's words really discomfited him. He was tackling a proposition which really belonged in the province of a younger man.

Once he was clear of his home he turned sharply to the north and then hurried down a side street. A brisk walk of about a mile brought him to an alley, in the middle of which was a private garage which he intended to enter. Feeling like a criminal and with a furtive glance up and down the street, he dodged into the alley.

The garage seemed to be securely locked, but offered no great resistance to Dan's efforts. He was crawling through into the darkness.

At this moment he heard a rough hail from the alley.

"Hey, you!" came the voice.

Dan turned his head and looked back. In the dim light from a street lamp at the far end of the alley he saw a burly policeman running toward him.

At this Dan's heart stood still. He was caught in the act; he was breaking and entering. They could arrest him for it, as he had no authority to enter this place by force. If he was sent to prison, what a sad end it would be to his proud record as policeman, and what a blow it would be to his faithful wife.

The cop, growling, was coming nearer and nearer. In a moment more he'd make the arrest.

Then, just as Dan felt there was no hope for him, a woman's voice suddenly screamed down the alley.

"Help! Help!" came the voice frantically. Then it trailed off into a frenzied scream.

The policeman stood still, hesitating. Then, as the woman screamed again, he swore at Dan, turned and ran in the direction of the screams.

Dan wriggled quickly through the window into the garage, where he instantly flashed a pocket electric light around the place. There was no car in the garage. But against the other side reposed the objects for which Dan had chanced arrest. He ad-

vanced quickly, examined them hastily, and then with a tremendous feeling of triumph he opened the spring lock on the front door of the garage and walked out of it. He closed the door behind him and walked sedately up to the house on the front of the lot, then around the house and into the street.

When he finally reached home his wife was anxiously waiting for him.

The next morning early Dan went to the office of the chief of police.

The chief was an old friend, and his small bright eyes lighted up in a friendly way when he welcomed Dan.

"What's on your mind, Dan?" he queried.

"I can give you the evidence which will get me the $5,000 reward in that Delkirk murder case."

The chief looked startled.

"Now that's interesting," said he. "Spill it."

"I've got the thing all figured out," said Dan. "First I want to tell you why I think Delkirk was on that side road."

"All right," said the chief. "Why?"

"Because he was going to Ferguson, over in the next state, to get married. If you'll look at a road map you'll see that the road is a short-cut to Ferguson, and that town is a favorite place for local folks to go to when they want to elope."

"I hadn't thought of that," the chief acknowledged. "But what makes you think he was going to get married?"

"Delkirk was all dressed up in good clothes—not regular taxi driver's clothes at all. He never would have been wearing those clothes if he hadn't had something special in view. And it's a cinch he was on his way to get married since he had his sweetheart with him?"

"His sweetheart with him?" cried the chief. "What are you talking about?"

"I'm giving you the straight dope the way I've got it ciphered out," Dan responded. "Delkirk had a girl named Maizie, and she was in the cab at the time he was shot. She didn't want to get mixed up in the affair, and maybe she feared being charged with Delkirk's murder. I figure that when the murderer turned his car around and had gone away she got out on the running-board of the taxi and took Delkirk's shoes off. Then she changed from her shoes to his shoes and walked through the mud and along the side of the road back toward town. She probably realized that if a woman's footprints were found in the mud they'd at once hunt for the girl in the case and question her. With only men's footprints found they'd never think of a girl. And I think she figured, too, that the footprints would soon be mixed up with those of the men who discovered the murder, which was what really happened. Then, about a quarter of a mile from the car, she changed back to her own shoes and threw Delkirk's shoes into a bush."

"Are you kidding me?" the chief demanded.

"Not at all. I went out there and found Delkirk's shoes. I brought them with me."

Dan unrolled a package he had been carrying and spread out a pair of man's muddy shoes on the table in front of the chief.

"I'm sure I've got the right dope on this," Dan resumed, "because a girl's footprints start back toward town along the side of the road right from the point where I found the man's shoes."

"Are you sure," gasped the chief, "that it wasn't this girl who killed Delkirk?"

"At first I thought she might be the one," Dan replied, "but now I'm sure it wasn't her. She was on her way to marry Delkirk, so there apparently was no object in her shooting him. I think you'll agree with me when I tell you what else I know. And you can question the girl. I haven't questioned her. She is Maizie Jennings, a stenographer at the Red and Yellow Cab Company's office."

The chief made a note of the name and of the girl's home address which Dan gave him.

"Then," said the chief, "I'm sure it was the Black Dot drivers who did it. We've got a drag-net out for the two missing drivers now. We'll get 'em in a short time."

"Listen," said Dan, "you fellows who saw those tracks in the mud overlooked one thing."

"I didn't see anything beside the tracks of the Red and Yellow cab and the Black Dot cab," said the chief. "There was no doubt it was a Black Dot cab; they all use those Flash tires and there's no mistaking the print of a Flash tread."

"That's what I thought," said Dan. "Your men jumped to conclusions too quick. You thought because you saw the Flash tread it must be a Black Dot cab. But I saw more in the photo than you did, and I at once looked up all the Black Dot cabs, and I saw that every one of them was carrying skid chains."

"Well?" said the chief, plainly puzzled.

"Look at that photo again," said Dan. "The Flash tires in that photo haven't any skid chains on!"

"By Jove!" exclaimed the chief. "Then who killed him?"

"That was the question that was puzzling me up until yesterday afternoon, when I called at the office of the Red and Yellow Cab Company. Then I learned that some expensive flowers came every day for Maizie Jennings. Now I ought to tell you, chief, that all along I'd been working with the thought in mind that whenever a good-looking young man is killed there's generally some girl responsible for the thing or mixed up in the murder."

"Yes," said the chief, "you're right. There generally is."

"So," went on Dan, "feeling there generally is some girl in such a murder case, I set out to find the girl. I found her in Maizie Jennings. The next thing was to find the other man. I thought the flowers might be a clue. I went to the florist, from whose place they came, and found the name of the man sending 'em. I figure this way that the man who sent the flowers is the man who killed Delkirk. And I imagine this is what happened: Maizie probably told the murderer she was through with him and that she was going to get married to Delkirk. The murderer very likely became insanely jealous and decided to kill Delkirk. He followed and shot him, not knowing Maizie was with Delkirk at the time. He may have even changed the regular tires on his car to those of the sort used by the Black Dot Company so's to make it seem that the murder was the result of the feud between the two companies. It was natural, you know, to do this because the trouble between the two companies would make suspicion naturally fall on the Black Dot drivers after the murder. And then the two Black Dot drivers who'd had trouble with Delkirk leaving town made it all the better for the murderer. He'd have gotten away with the whole thing if he'd only put skid chains on his new Flash tires."

"And the murderer is——" questioned the chief.

"The man who sent the flowers every day to Maizie, the man in whose garage I found four new Flash tires with mud on 'em last night, the man who had a business motive for doing the Black Dot company dirt by making it look as though they were responsible for the murder. He is M. S. Maguire, the president of the Red and Yellow Cab Company. He put up a reward of $5,000 for finding the murderer to divert suspicion from himself."

Some hours later Dan, en route home, bought an extra newspaper from a newsboy. With great satisfaction he read that Maguire had been arrested. Maizie had been questioned by the police, and the result proved that Dan's theory about her action was correct. She identified Maguire as the man who had fired the fatal shot, as she had seen him shoot from the roadside.

With great satisfaction Dan spread the paper before his wife when he arrived at home.

"Well, I guess it's an automobile for us!" he exclaimed. "I may be old and pensioned, but I'm there, anyway."

"Huh," said his wife, "you'd never have gotten away with it if it hadn't been for me!"

"What do you mean?" Dan asked.

"I mean," said she, "that I followed you when you left the house last night, and when that cop nearly arrested you for bursting into that garage, it was me that saved you. I was the woman who screamed!"

Street Characters

A PROMINENT element of the street life of every large city is the class generally denominated street characters, said a ward detective to the writer. The public eye has become so accustomed to them that their absence would be marked. Indeed, a street without its full quota of this class would present an unfinished exterior. The number and variety of street characters have greatly increased during recent years. Like the articles at a country sale, they are too numerous to mention. A few of them, however, will justify especial notice as a sample of the entire stock.

Detectives instinctively get in the habit of studying these street characters. Occasions arise when people so spotted may be called into some criminal case. The detective's recollection of a memorized individual often helps the solution of a difficult problem.

One of the most prominent street characters is the newsboy. His numbers rather than his size gives him precedence in a partial enumeration of this class. He, however, occupies more space, according to his size, than any other inhabitant of street surface. He is industrious, persistent, reasonably impudent and frequently unclean.

The newsboy is in season the whole year round. His business may be subject to slight fluctuations, but his stock-in-trade is the same the year through. The newsboy is generally present. He comes early and remains late. He almost invariably has two or three and sometimes more to help him come. His office is on the street and his place of lodging not unfrequently has an element of intangibility. He is not too modest to ask for patronage, and not so timid but what he can, without a brush or tinge of shame, thrust his goods under your nose and yell like a demon in your ear. He has the art of insinuating himself down to a fine point. When the place where he is and the place where he is not are compared the former is found to be in a large majority. To enumerate the prominent street characters and leave the newsboy out would be a play of Hamlet minus the Prince of Denmark.

Of course this does not apply to those who run news stands.

Persons generally known as street fakirs are also prominent characters. Like the balance of mankind the street fakir is looking for the mighty dollar, but unlike many others, he is content if he only reaps a fraction of the dollar. They do business on a limited capital and not infrequently change with the season. In fact, they sometimes have a dismal change. A street fakir with a large and varied stock of jewelry one day may on the next loom up as a cutlery merchant or bloom out as a basket florist. He caters to the public appetite and befriends the long-suffering by dispensing various healing balms. He thrives on the pedestrian trade and resorts to various devices to catch the eyes of the passing throng. He is a jeweler, a doctor, periodical dealer and bookseller, a chiropodist and florist, sells buttons and songs, vends sweets and toothpicks, while he fairly revels in wealth if he is lucky enough to be the first to introduce a mechanical toy. The street fakir is also a numerous class, and plies his trade in sunshine and storm. His extinction would tend to lonesome the streets and remove a recognized landmark.

In the spring, when the warm sun bursts the bud, and the grass "comes creeping everywhere," the ice-cream man comes forth, and the lemonade stand dots the landscape. As the weather gets hotter, and the dog-star rages, the latter vendor increases in numbers until he fills every unoccupied nook and doorway in the frequented portions of the city. This character is a

tender plant of a tropical variety, is short-lived. The first cool wave of approaching fall nips his profession.

Another street character is the organ beggar, but he is almost extinct now. Both sexes belonged to this class. They were chiefly composed of the lame, the halt and the blind. Sometimes they were well-to-do, but do not display it or their business would be ruined. A prominent member of this class was a stumpy old woman of West —— street. Fair weather or foul she was at her lamp-post. She turned away at an old squeaky music-box that sung for charity so long that it contracted a cracked voice and a wheezy respiration.

Then there is the individual whose highest ambition seems to be to just exist. He is a character in the way of a street ornament. He toils not, neither does he spin, but he lives, moves, has his being and dresses well enough for the requirements of the class with whom he associates. No one knows whence he draws his sustenance or what is his ultimate aim or object, if both are not absolutely intangible. The only thing that gives this class any degree of animation is the order of the police to "move on."

Not unfrequently the shabby genteel man is encountered whose acquaintance is readily reached. He is of the class who borrow but never lend. He is invariably hungry and full. He is usually looking for a remittance that never comes. He is a relic of better days—a seed pod of the ripened past. His stock-in-trade is an article of unadulterated cheek. He is swayed to and fro by the waves of destiny—a veritable human drone.

In contradistinction to the man who rarely moves, and at such times displays a small degree of activity, is the man who is always in a hurry on the street. He desires to convey the impression that he is engulfed in business of pushing moment, but if one expert is enough to shadow him he will be found, nine cases out of ten, to stop and pose in some shady corner for an hour, when he hurries to some other point, without an object or an aim at the termination.

The study of street characters is not devoid of interest. It is a good field from which to learn important lessons in human nature. In rare cases a real philosopher is found among the mass. If so there is usually a lack of balance between his philosophy and ambition. As a rule these street characters are more deserving of the denomination of plagues and excrescences upon the social and business world than any title that would denote merit or worth. They are a class that would be missed, but not on account of any intrinsic value.

To Our Readers.

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Mystery Magazine

The feature stories already published in this magazine are worth reading. The following are the titles of the novelettes contained in the numbers already printed.

1 "The Eel Man," by Robert Carlton Brown.
2 "Zitana of Maison Rouge," by F. W. Doughty.
3 "The Mysterious Web," by Armstrong Perry.
4 "Under the Hypnotic Spell," by Dr. H. Enton.
5 "The Silken Sheath," by Crittenden Marriott.
6 "A Fortune Teller's Secret," by Gladys Hall.
7 "The Mystic Emblem," by Marie Coolidge Rask.
8 "The Cards of Fate," by William Goode.
9 "Mr. Bachelor's Apartments," by W. H. Osborne.
10 "The Inner Wheel," by Octavius Roy Cohen.
11 "The Voice of the Valley," by Robt. C. Brown.
12 "The Sign of the Seven Sharks," by C. F. Oursler.
13 "Under a Mask," By Crittenden Marriott.
14 "Case 4,444," by Gladys Hall.
15 "After a Million," by Police Captain Howard.
16 "Shadowing the Blue Triangle," by C. F. Oursler.
17 "The Case of Captain Fortesque," by R. Ingalls.
18 "The Bird-Headed Sphinx," by Edith S. Tupper.
19 "The Double Mystery," by Dr. Harry Enton.
20 "The Magician Detective," by C. F. Oursler.
21 "King Cobra Mystery," by George Gilbert.
22 "The Haunted Corridors," by Wm. H. Osborne.
23 "No Man's Man," by Maxwell Smith.
24 "The Trevor Puzzle," by T. C. Harbaugh.
25 "The Trail of Roses," by Edmund Condon.
26 "The Hindoo Vanishing Clue," by Pauline Bouve.
27 "Who Was Guilty?" by Beulah Poynter.
28 "The Evil Eye," by Chas. F. Oursler.
29 "The Thirteenth Door," by Edith S. Tupper.
30 "The Game of Detective Carew," by L. Jerome.
31 "Law-maker and Law-breaker," by B. Poynter
32 "The Counterfeit Heiress," by Inspector Harrigan.
33 "Tracked to China," by Chief Roger O'Brien.
34 "After the German Spies," by May Halsey Miller.
35 "The Clue in the Box," by Alexander Douglas.
36 "Trained by a French Detective," by Rene Renaud.
37 "A Drop of Ink," by Lieut. Robt. W. Warden.
38 "The Ten Doctors," by Allan Arnold Fox.
39 "The Stain on Page 61," by Chas. T. Jordan.
40 "A Masked Mystery," by Police Sergeant Kelly.
41 "The Black Soul," by Beulah Poynter.
42 "The Sanctuary," by Wm. H. Osborne.
43 "The Mystery of the Seven Shadows," by Chas. F. Oursler.
44 "The Sign of the Dragon," by C. Martin Eddy, Jr.
45 "The Magic of Detective Woo Fang," by Frank F. Whitfield.
46 "The Decoy," by William Hamilton Osborne.
47 "The House With 30 Steps," by Ralph D. Porter.
48 "When the Clock Struck 13," by Dr. Harry Enton.
49 "A Piece of Blotting Paper," by Dorothy Weber.
50 "The $200,000 Mystery," by Ethel Rosemon.
51 "The Case of Dr. Brice," by Mary R. P. Hatch.
52 "The Phantom Motor," by Laura R. Montgomery.
53 "The Blackjack," by William H. Osborne.
54 "The Whispering Head," by Chas. F. Oursler.
55 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by B. Poynter.
56 "The Secret of the Sealed Book," by E. Rosemon
57 "The Clue of Steel," by Willis Lathrop.
58 "Alias Louis Vardon," by Wm. H. Osborne.
59 "Mystery of the Old-Time Club," by C. Bingold.
60 "Caught With the Evidence," by Ethel Rosemon.
61 "A Little Gold Spider," by Cecil Burleigh.
62 "The Velvet Touch," by Julian Darrow.
63 "The Clue of the Red Lamp," by C. F. Oursler.
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65 "Quicker Than the Eye," by Ralph Cummins.
66 "The Clue of the Dark Room," by H. Craigie.
67 "The Tongue of Osiris," by Marc Edmund Jones.
68 "Detective Wade's Big Case," by E. Rosemon.
69 "The Spirit Bell," by Charles Fulton Oursler.
70 "The House Behind the Wall," by Julian Darrow.
71 "The Admiral's Spoons," by Wm. H. Osborne.
72 "The Canine Clue," by Thomas J. Lally.
73 "The Psychic Enemy," by Arthur Wm. Anderson.
74 "The Wonder Girl," by Ralph Cummins.
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77 "The Little White Room," by Edmund Jones.
78 "The Stolen Year," by Edmund Elliot.
79 "The Affair at Hollywood House," by W. Kofoed.
80 "A Keyless Mystery," by Hamilton Craigie.
81 "Professor Satan," by Charles Fulton Oursler.
82 "Who Killed McNally?" by Beulah Poynter.
83 "The Clue of the Whorl," by Katherine Stagg.
84 "The 'Czar' and the Ring," by Edmund Elliot.
85 "The Clue of Flame," by Jack Bechdolt.
86 "The Face in the Crowd," by Edmund Jones.
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98 "Counterfeit Clues," by Chas. F. Oursler.
99 "The Cross," by W. S. Ingram.
100 "The Secret Service Mystery," by Hamilton Craigie and Elliot Balestier.
101 "A Crimson Price," by Elliott Lester.
102 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by G. Jacobs.
103 "A Museum Mystery," by Jack Bechdolt.
104 "The Little Red Book," by J. Alexander Young.
105 "A Man from Siam," by Chas. F. Oursler.
106 "The Clue of the Emerald Ring," by B. Poynter.
107 "Hell's Hinges," by Hamilton Craigie.
108 "The Wolf," by Katherine Stagg.
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110 "A Whispering Mummy," by Chas. F. Oursler.
111 "Trapping the Jewel Smugglers," by B. Poynter.
112 "The Missing Evidence," by Harold F. Podhaski.
113 "A Clue by Radio," by Capt. Jack Static.
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116 "The Girl in the Case," by Carl Glick.
117 "A Scientific Detective," by D. G. McDonald.
118 "Number Nine Queer Street," by Jack Bechdolt.
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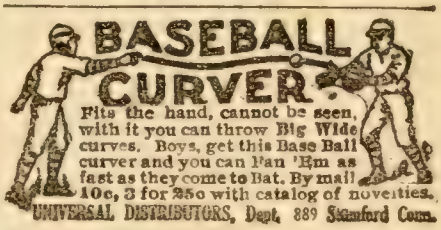

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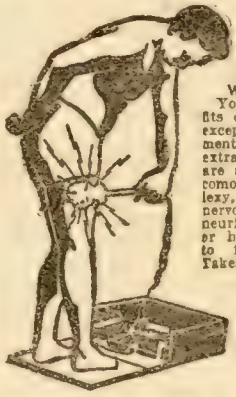

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